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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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WHAT IRAQIS WANT

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Kanan Makiya **19** **The Wasteland** Last week, I returned to southern Iraq for the first time in 37 years. I saw children begging American troops for food and water, bewildered that an army powerful enough to conquer their country cannot alleviate their suffering. That bewilderment is now turning to fury. Unless the Bush administration moves quickly, the opportunity I have been waiting a lifetime for will be lost.

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COVER PHOTO BY *Yannis Behrakis/Reuters/Landov*

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CORRESPONDENCE

BIBLE STUDY

ANDREW SULLIVAN AND THE NEW REPUBLIC have made a great contribution to the discussion of the issue of homosexuality by giving readers the article about *Lawrence* v. *Texas*, the sodomy case before the U.S. Supreme Court ("Unnatural Law," March 24). My only concern is with Sullivan's closing, which says that hopefully the Supreme Court will now end this violation of civil rights and invasion of privacy by "liberat[ing] a whole class of persons." It seems to me that the Supreme Court will follow the precedent set by the decision it made in the Colorado Amendment 2 case, *Romer* v. *Evans*, and say that it is as *individuals* that we have these rights. Thus, the sodomy laws, whether they are enforced only against homosexual citizens or against all citizens, are an example of unequal enforcement of the law, violate the basic civil rights of citizens, and are unconstitutional.

BILLY GLOVER
Co-founder and Vice-Chair
Homosexual Information Center
Bossier City, Louisiana

SULLIVAN MAKES AN ARGUMENT against the Texas sodomy laws based in part on an evolving understanding of the so-called Judeao-Christian sexual ethic. While he may be correct about Christian theology, Sullivan's perception of Jewish law and philosophy is completely off base.

Sullivan states that "Jewish and Christian Scriptures . . . prohibit divorce, which is now legal across the Western world." Actually, Jewish Scriptures expressly allow for divorce and include provisions for a woman's remarriage (Book of Deuteronomy 24). The Talmud devotes significant coverage to divorce law, taking for granted divorce's permissibility and focusing on its execution and implications.

In a more significant difference between the two religions, the Jewish view of sex is not purely procreative. Biblical and rabbinic law have always unambiguously allowed and encouraged married couples' sexual relationships even absent the possibility of reproduction. The Talmud also debates allowable contraceptive practices. Tradition considers the Song of Solomon—an allegory about two lovers and a model for the human relationship with God—the holiest book in the Bible. "Jewish" sexual ethics have remained essentially unchanged throughout the centuries: Sexual union between a husband and wife is allowed, encouraged, and sanctified.

RABBI ELLI SCHORR
Silver Spring, Maryland

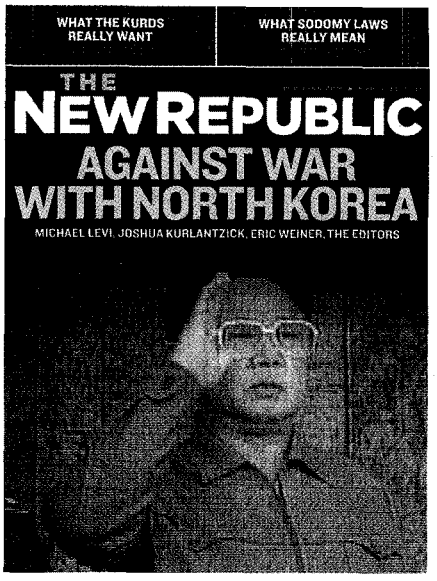
SULLIVAN WILL NOT FIND ANY Scripture in the Bible that backs his description of sodomy; and he exclusively bases his opinions and views on Catholic religious laws that were created hundreds of years ago and are not based in Scripture and therefore do not represent the mainstream Christian view.

Sullivan's definition of sodomy is not biblically based. Nowhere in the Bible does it state that oral sex, masturbation, contraceptive sex, coitus interruptus, or anal sex is wrong. I am not doubting that in ancient Catholic writings you can find such material. However, Protestant Christians, who make up the majority of the Christian community in the United States, do not accept those writings as valid because they cannot be reinforced by any Scripture.

AMBER BILLS
Sammamish, Washington

ANDREW SULLIVAN REPLIES:

RABBI ELLI SCHORR IS RIGHT that Jewish sexual ethics have carved out a narrow place for divorce. But that place is still far less liberal than our current civil laws, which allow multiple, no-fault divorces. My point was simply that, if we can change some biblical inheritances in the law, like divorce, we can also change others, like sodomy. Amber Bills is incorrect to say that my understanding of sodomy is not based in Scripture. The very term "sodomy" is derived from Genesis, as I pointed out; and homosexual sex is explicitly barred in Leviticus. I focus on the Catholic arguments since, for 1,500 years, these determined the meaning of sodomy in Europe, and subsequently English and thereby U.S. sodomy laws. Without an understanding of that debate and history, we cannot understand our present.


WHAT THE KURDS REALLY WANT
WHAT SODOMY LAWS REALLY MEAN
THE NEW REPUBLIC
AGAINST WAR WITH NORTH KOREA
MICHAEL LEVI, JOSHUA KURLANTZICK, ERIC WEINER, THE EDITORS

NUCLEAR PEACE

IN THE NEW REPUBLIC'S EDITORIAL "Bomb Scare," the editors conclude that the United States should negotiate with Kim Jong Il and discuss at length what we might expect from such negotiations (March 24). Although I agree that unilateral war with North Korea would be a disaster, there is no reason to believe that Kim Jong Il will be dissuaded from developing nuclear weapons. I believe that it is reprehensible that China, Russia, South Korea, and Japan have been sitting on the sidelines of this situation while the United States is prompted to go it alone politically, militarily, and economically and surrender to this madman's blackmail.

There is, however, a very simple and elegant solution to this mess: We should,

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†Monitoring the Future study, December 2002. University of Michigan

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Free Form

TRB FROM WASHINGTON

NOTHING MAKES ME more nervous about the future of Iraq than hearing Bush officials declare that its people are free. Donald Rumsfeld said so six times in his post-looting "freedom's untidy" press conference on April 11. A few days later, President Bush told a crowd in St. Louis that, "Thanks to the courage and might of our military, the Iraqi people are now free."

No, they're not. The president and the defense secretary are playing a semantic game. Just because the Iraqi people are free *from Saddam Hussein* doesn't mean they're free. Freedom, after all, is not just the absence of centralized dictatorship. If it were, the Somali people would have been free in 1991, when they overthrew the tyrant Mohammed Siad Barre and saw anarchy and starvation follow in his wake. Political theory 101 says that, while people might be theoretically free in the absence of an effective sovereign, that freedom has little real meaning. And, today in Iraq, there is still no effective sovereign—there is only the strongest guy on your particular block. If he's an American soldier, you may indeed enjoy the beginnings of freedom. But, given how thinly American forces are stretched, most blocks don't have a GI; they have a cleric with a gun. And many of those clerics have about as much respect for individual liberty as Mullah Omar.

Why does it matter that Bush and Rumsfeld are overstating what the United States has thus far achieved? Because in the coming months there will be enormous pressure to declare political victory and get out—before the foundations for real Iraqi freedom have been established. If the president says that, with a new, decent government, Iraqis can *become* free, he implicitly tells Americans that our work there is only beginning. If he says Iraqis are *already* free, he implicitly tells Americans that our work there is done.

The pressure to get out quickly will stem from the peculiar configuration of the post-Saddam debate in Washington. On one side, the State Department wants an extended American presence because it prizes unity and stability and fears that too hasty a U.S. exit could imperil both. Supporting Foggy Bottom are establishment liberals like *The New York Times*. But the problem for these Council on Foreign Relations–style internationalists, inside and outside the Bush administration, is that they generally opposed the war, which has left their influence at an all-time low. What's more, the people they'd like to build a better Iraq—State Department bureaucrats, U.N. bureaucrats, and Iraqis not named Ahmed Chalabi—haven't gotten the job. The people who have, such as retired General Jay Garner, will probably take their instructions from the Pentagon.

Pentagon civilians like Paul Wolfowitz should be the greatest proponents of U.S. nation-building in Iraq, given that it's the only chance to realize their vision of a model democracy in the Middle East. But they share the Pentagon with an officer corps that loathes nation-building as destructive to military morale. Worse, Rumsfeld—who has almost single-handedly neutered the peacekeeping force in Afghanistan—generally agrees with the military brass on this count. The resulting irony is that, while the Pentagon has grander ambitions for post-Saddam Iraq than the State Department, it is prepared to commit fewer resources to its reconstruction. When Army Chief of Staff Eric Shinseki suggested in March that post-Saddam peacekeeping might require several hundred thousand troops, Wolfowitz said his estimate was "way too high." And officials at Garner's Pentagon-allied Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance recently told *The Washington Post* that their work would take "months, not years."

The best hope for a democratic Iraq is if administration hawks such as Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney, aided by their conservative allies in the press, realize that, without a serious commitment to nation-building—meaning a large, long-term U.S. troop commitment and lots of money for reconstruction—they can kiss their dreams of Arab democracy goodbye. Unfortunately, such a commitment is probably not in the Bush administration's political self-interest. First of all, study after study has found that building democracy in Iraq could cost $15 billion to $20 billion per year. As we have learned with homeland security (see Jonathan Chait, "The 9/10 President," March 10), the Bush tax cuts make large, new expenditures extremely difficult. Already, White House Budget Director Mitch Daniels has declared that Iraq's reconstruction "will not require sustained aid." Will conservatives demand large-scale reconstruction spending even if it undermines the case for Bush's latest tax cuts? Don't bet on it.

Secondly, emphasizing nation-building means emphasizing what needs to be done in Iraq rather than what has already been achieved. And conservatives, by and large, are in no mood to do that. They suspect that antiwar, anti-Bush types are stressing the negative to deny the president his rightful "I told you so" moment. Those suspicions aren't baseless. But they lead conservatives to consistently see the glass as half full, which drastically diminishes the pressure on the Bush administration to commit to post-war reconstruction. In the case of Afghanistan, for instance, liberals have been saying for over a year that, outside Kabul, the country is in miserable shape. But Pollyannaish conservatives generally ignore the problem, leaving the Bush administration politically free to ignore it as well.

The third reason the pressure to get out of Iraq will be so intense is that we can always justify a cut-and-run by claiming it's what the Iraqis themselves want. Even on the right, the language of anti-imperialism carries weight. But the truth is that, because Iraqis are still not free, we don't yet know what they want. Yes, the clerics filling the post-Saddam void seem to want the United States gone. But conservatives, of all people, should know that self-appointed strongmen don't represent the people just because they say they do. (Especially when many of those strongmen are themselves being aided by a foreign power: Iran.) Do the Iraqis want a liberal government or a fundamentalist one? We'll never know unless we establish liberal institutions through which Iraqis can freely express themselves. And we have learned in the last week that such institutions have little hope unless America makes itself the sovereign on every block in Iraq and doesn't relinquish its authority until something decent and sustainable has been built.

The alternative is for the United States to leave quickly and cheaply and pretend that we have freed Iraqis to determine their own fate. But, if the mullahs seize power, the Iraqi people won't be free to determine anything. Being ruled by one of your countrymen doesn't make you free. The Bush administration understood this pretty well when it argued for war against a guy named Saddam Hussein.

PETER BEINART

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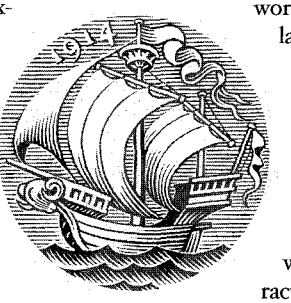
Flagellation

So Karbala in 2003 is not Philadelphia in 1787. Surprise! The overthrow of Saddam Hussein's tyranny was a great historical attainment, and it is surely too soon to allow the measure of what has been gained to be lost in the din of complaint (some of it cheap, some of it not cheap) that has characterized the aftermath of the conquest. Still, one of the lessons of this war is that big things can be done not only for big reasons. The Bush administration is now busy with little reasons. There was certainly something less than Churchillian about the Halliburton and Bechtel contracts. But the doctrinaire mentality of the liberators of Iraq, their way of lowering the occasion to their sectarian level, is even more alarmingly apparent in their naïve notions about the relation of religion to democracy in Iraq.

The Bush administration seems to be unreflectively transposing the simplistic ideas of American conservatism to the distinctly un-American circumstances of Iraq. For decades, American conservatives have preached that religion is not the enemy of democracy. This is not exactly false, but the proposition needs to be formulated more accurately. Religion is not the enemy of democracy *in America*. For America was founded by religious dissenters who sought freedom of religion; they regarded liberty as the condition of their godly lives. But even this is not the whole historical picture, because the devout fathers and mothers of America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries exploited the spiritual opportunity of the new world in two ways. There were those who escaped the oppression of their creed by other creeds so as to establish the oppression of other creeds by their creed—who objected to the intolerance that they had themselves experienced not because it was inimical to the spirit of religion but because it was directed at the wrong target. The Puritans in New England established what one of them sinisterly described as "a well-bounded toleration," in which civil institutions, while not strictly theocratic, were designed to enforce the authority of the dominant faith. And there were those—Roger Williams (who was banished by the mullahs of Massachusetts), Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and the other prophets of decency—who magnificently recoiled from all intolerance, from all ideals of uniformity and coercion in affairs of belief.

It was a revolution in Western life when the party of religious tolerance in America triumphed over the party of religious intolerance in America, and the separation of the civil from the ecclesiastical was immortalized in the Constitution. If ever there was an American exceptionalism, this was it. But it is the exceptionalist character of the American dispensation in religion that should alert us to the dangers of presuming that the rest of the world is cheerfully hospitable to our divine innovation. After all, there is no faith, certainly no monotheistic faith, that does not believe that it is in the exclusive possession of the truth; and insofar as various monotheistic confessions in the West have succeeded in mitigating the exclusivist temper, and found ways to reconcile their doctrines, however uneasily or inconsistently, with the demands and the dignities of democracy, this was accomplished after centuries of painful struggle, in which liberalism in religion—and liberalism more generally—gained its own "martyrs."



In its planning for the war and its aftermath, the Bush administration clearly viewed the Shia of Iraq as agents of progress, and nothing like the Shia of Iran. The romanticization of the Shia was owed substantially to a proper sympathy for their fate in the years of Saddam Hussein's rule. The ecstatic wildness of the crowds at the Arbein assembly at Karbala, which Saddam Hussein had prohibited for decades, was a profoundly deserved political exhilaration. But it was not only that. We must not fall into the old mistake of interpreting religious ideas and actions as symbolic versions of political ideas and actions. Religious people take religious instructions seriously, even literally. What happened at Karbala was also the delirious release of ancient theological passions. These are not the passions that the construction of an open society will require.

The freedom that we have delivered to the Shia of Iraq is the freedom to be themselves, not the freedom to be us. And so one of the true believers told a reporter from *The New York Times* that, "We want an Islamic state here similar to the Iranian model. We tried liberalism, Communism and secularism, but none of them worked, so why not try an Islamic state?" It is chilling to learn that the rule of Saddam Hussein is regarded as Iraq's experiment with secularism. A cleric ominously explained that, "[a]fter all, the Shiites are the majority in Iraq and if we want to apply the democracy that the West is propagating for Iraq, then the government should be elected by the majority, and the majority are Shiite." It was our worldview that the sheik was flagellating, adding that "anyone supported by the United States is cursed by us." Does this mean that democracy is impossible in Iraq? Not at all; but the Bush administration will flounder in its efforts at democratization if it does not grow somewhat less mesmerized by God. ■

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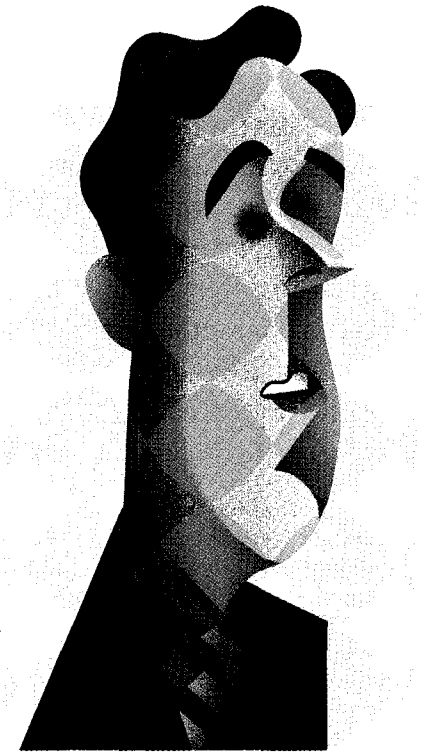
NOTEBOOK

RICK SANTORUM, LEGAL THEORIST . . . DONALD RUMSFELD, ART HISTORIAN

SUPREME CANT

"IF THE SUPREME COURT SAYS that you have the right to consensual [gay] sex within your home, then you have the right to bigamy, you have the right to polygamy, you have the right to incest, you have the right to adultery. You have the right to anything." Thus pronounced Republican Senator Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania this week in an interview with an Associated Press reporter. It's hard to characterize Santorum's remarks as anything other than those of a homophobic bigot; but, rest assured, Santorum's staff has tried. As Santorum's spokesperson Erica Wright explained in the wake of the firestorm her boss's comments kicked up, Santorum has no problem with gay relationships; the senator, a 1986 graduate of Dickinson School of Law, simply worries that, if the Supreme Court decides to overturn Texas's anti-sodomy law, it will, in one fell swoop, grant people the right to commit bigamy, polygamy, incest, and adultery.

With apologies to Justice Santorum, that's just stupid. First, the senator's concerns about creating a right to commit adultery are a bit late: Adultery is actually legal in some places—like Texas. Second, the fundamental issue in bigamy and polygamy is the number of people to whom a person can be *married*, not the number or kind of people with whom a person can have sex; any ruling overturning the Texas law would be carefully written so as to have as little bearing on the institution of marriage as possible. Most importantly, Santorum's legal reasoning betrays a remarkable ignorance of the grounds on which the Court might overturn Texas's anti-sodomy law. If the Court overturns the law on privacy grounds, it will undoubtedly do so in a narrowly tailored fashion, stipulating that, if a state is going to forbid consensual relations in a home, it must have a good reason. And, while a state might not have a good reason for forbidding sodomy, it most certainly has good reasons for forbidding incest (e.g., protecting children) and bigamy and polygamy (e.g., protecting women from exploitation). Alternatively, the Court could overturn the Texas anti-sodomy law on equal protection grounds, ruling that the law discriminates against gays; but, since laws against incest, bigamy, and polygamy do not discriminate in any way that the constitution condemns, those laws would be unaffected by the ruling. "No one on the Court would want to rule that there's a privacy right here that in any way would raise the questions Santorum's discussing," says University of Chicago Law School Professor Cass R. Sunstein. Which means that the senator's defenders face a dilemma: In disputing that their man is a bigot, are they conceding that he's a moron?



Rick Santorum

DOG BITES MAJORITY LEADER

LAST DECEMBER, AS CONSERVATIVES were falling over themselves in their enthusiasm for soon-to-be Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, Noam Scheiber noted in these pages that the doctor-turned-Tennessee-senator should enjoy the adulation while he could ("Hatchet Job," December 30 & January 6). "The right wing of the Republican Party," Scheiber wrote, "is simply incapable of accepting the kind of compromises a Senate majority leader must make." Thus, the Senate GOP remains trapped in a perpetual cycle whereby it installs new leaders it believes will usher in a new era of conservative purity—Bob Dole, Trent Lott, Bill Frist—only to inevitably turn on those same leaders when they get down to the messy business of legislating.

Barely four months into his tenure, Frist's honeymoon with conservatives is already over. Frist's crime? He agreed to a tax cut of only $350 billion, rather than the $726 billion demanded by President Bush. Of course, Frist wants a big tax cut just as much as Bush. The problem is that, due to the objections of moderate Republicans, he can't get a majority for any tax cut larger than $350 billion. Frist, wrote conservative columnist Robert Novak, "not only accepted an unacceptable limit on President Bush's tax cut but kept it secret while hurrying out of town two weekends ago." House Majority Leader Tom DeLay warned that Frist's deal would cause "serious long-term consequences." This falling-out between conservatives and their newest darling as Senate leader was comically predictable. The only surprise is that it took four months.

TRUSTING

MARTIN INDYK, THE AUSTRALIAN spook turned Clinton-era peace processor, has outlined a new plan for Israeli-Palestinian peace in the recent issue of *Foreign Affairs*: Put the West Bank

DAVID COWLES

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and Gaza under American trusteeship in preparation for Palestinian independence. The historically minded may remember that this has been tried before. The last time a trusteeship governed Palestine west of the Jordan River was during the two and a half decades when the British ran a mandate for the League of Nations. Until 1948, that is, when His Majesty's bloodied troops hauled down the Union Jack, a mordant confession that neither the Arabs of Palestine nor the surrounding Arab countries would accept any formula that included a Jewish state. Indyk thinks the last half-century has changed things. But most Palestinians don't—even the most moderate of them think that the armistice lines of 1949 would constitute a tremendous concession. Indyk told *The New York Sun*, "The purpose of trusteeship is to grow the democracy." But it's hard to see how democracy will be inculcated under Indyk's plan, given that anti-democracies such as Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia will be involved in the "training of the Palestinian security services." There's one more problem with Indyk's proposal: As he himself admits, "Some Americans might die." Here, at least, his predictions are almost certainly on the mark.

THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE

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—Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, April 11

"A handful of ancient objects stolen from Iraq's national museum were returned today. A U.S. soldier at the museum said local residents handed over bags containing twenty vases and other antiquities. Thousands of objects disappeared [from Baghdad museums] last week."

—"The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer," April 18

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

IN THE COLUMN TITLED "ALBATROSS" in this magazine's February 17 issue, we referred to Rev. Al Sharpton's "1987 conviction for defaming a man he accused of raping Tawana Brawley." Rev. Sharpton has correctly pointed out that the judgment entered against him was a civil judgment for damages, not a criminal conviction. In the same column, we referred to Rev. Sharpton's "1995 incitement against a Jewish store owner in Harlem," which the column described as having "culminated in the racially motivated murder of seven of the store's employees." We did not mean to suggest that Rev. Sharpton intended to incite those murders. ■

Inside the Box | Bruce Reed

SPOILS OF WAR Iraq victory sends Bush's poll numbers soaring. Reaction on K Street: "Time to start looting!"

EYE FOR AN EYE
Clipped superhawk Perle defends revenge killings in Iraq: "Now that the war is over, I've got a few scores to settle myself."

ANCIENT ARTIFACT

Cultural experts scold United States over plunder of Iraq's National Museum. White House rebuttal: "As long as Rumsfeld's around, we've got all the priceless antiquities we need."

CODE RED White House reduces threat level to yellow. Rove: "Good thing we don't have one of those for the economy!"

ANTE UP

North Korea agrees to multilateral talks: "All the more countries to bribe us with!"

INVESTOR CLASS Cheney votes to give himself $107,000 tax break: "It's like being back in the private sector!"

DRINK AMERICAN
U.S. boycotts are killing French wine sales. Bush to citizenry: "Your country thanks you for your sacrifice."

BRIGHT, SHINING LIE
American general who's running postwar Iraq says we would have won in Vietnam if Bush had been president. Bush: "And I still could have skipped Guard duty!"

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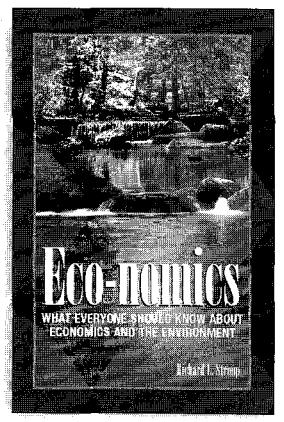

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by Richard Stroup

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Campaign Journal

Field Test

BY RYAN LIZZA

THE MOST DEPRESSING place to be on the day Saddam Hussein's statue fell in Baghdad was probably the ballroom of the Wardman Park Marriott in Washington, D.C. This was the site of the largest Democratic campaign event to take place during the three-week war with Iraq, a candidate forum hosted by the Children's Defense Fund (CDF). If Karl Rove had designed the ideal setting to magnify the stature gap between the wartime president and his Democratic challengers on the day tanks rolled through Baghdad, he could hardly have done better than forcing the viable candidates, such as John Kerry, John Edwards, and Joe Lieberman, to share a stage with Al Sharpton, Dennis Kucinich, and Carol Moseley Braun, and making all of the above genuflect before Marian Wright Edelman, the CDF president and liberal icon whose husband quit the Clinton administration in disgust over welfare reform.

On April 9, this is where the Democratic field found itself. The tone was set when the candidates were introduced one by one, and Sharpton's name generated the rowdiest applause. Lieberman used his opening statement to praise Saddam's ouster. "As I saw that statue of Saddam Hussein falling in Baghdad, I could feel the hopes of the children of Iraq for a better life rising," he said. On my recording of the event, one can just hear the faint sound of a lone pair of hands clapping slowly three times and then abruptly stopping, as if cowed into silence by the obvious lack of enthusiasm in the audience.

Unlike Lieberman, Moseley Braun was unimpressed by the scene in Firdos Square earlier in the day. "If we spent eighty billion dollars to kill Saddam Hussein," the ex-ambassador to New Zealand explained, "that's seventy-nine billion dollars too much." She would rather have seen the money spent on health care and other domestic priorities. Howard Dean echoed Moseley Braun's lefty isolationist belief that rebuilding Iraq would simply cost too much. (Only Edwards made the obvious point that Democrats could actually be in favor of spending money abroad on Iraq *and* at home on health care.) Dean then added perhaps the most stunning line from a Democratic candidate during the war: "We should have contained Saddam. Well, we got rid of him. I suppose that's a good thing."

IT'S A GOOD thing for Dean and the other Democrats that the CDF cattle call passed with little notice. But, if the media's impressive ability to pivot quickly from 24-hour coverage of the war to 24-hour coverage of Laci Peterson's murder is any sign, the Democratic presidential campaign may abruptly emerge from its wartime media blackout when the nine candidates gather May 3 in Columbia, South Carolina, for their first big debate. The format for the evening, 90 minutes split between nine candidates, will only allow for snippets from each of the contenders, but on that day the new contours of the campaign should start to come into focus.

The first postwar question that the Columbia debate will help answer is whether or not Dean remains a force. Until now, Dean has been the darling of Democratic beauty contests, hamming it up and basking in the glow of liberal interest-group cheers, from NARAL Pro-Choice America to the Iowa Federation of Labor to the CDF. But, unlike most of the recent Democratic events, the South Carolina debate will be hosted by ABC News rather than an interest group on the liberal edge of the party. There will be a lot less time for pandering and applause lines.

Dean may also find South Carolina a little outside of his comfort zone. Unlike Iowa and New Hampshire, where Dean has spent most of his time campaigning, South Carolina has a Democratic electorate that is 40 percent African American—not a natural constituency for the ex-Vermont governor. The state's white electorate, meanwhile, is far more conservative than the young volunteers Dean has recruited from the college towns of Iowa City and Hanover. And there's a huge population of veterans—the state has a dozen military bases—who are presumably more certain than Dean that Saddam's overthrow is good news.

Dean's performance in South Carolina and beyond will have a significant ripple effect on the rest of the field. Kerry, whose status as front-runner was undermined during the war when he placed second behind Edwards in the money race, must soon decide if Dean's candidacy represents a mortal threat or not. Dean's road to the nomination runs over the carcass of Kerry's campaign, and, if the governor shows staying power, Kerry will be forced further to the left to dispatch Dean. There's plenty of ammunition in Dean's record. He has often bragged that liberals in Vermont opposed him. Dean is proud of his National Rifle Association endorsements; he supports the death penalty for cop-killers and child-murderers (Kerry supports it only for terrorists); and his obsession with a balanced budget in Vermont led him to propose some health care cuts that he might be less proud of these days. "The question is, can [Dean] keep the lefty real estate?" asks a Kerry adviser. "Do liberals suspend their disbelief on this guy for much longer?"

According to Dean aides, his plan is to pivot away from being the antiwar candidate and go back to being the health care candidate, where he started the campaign. But he'll soon find this to be crowded terrain. By the end of May, Edwards and Kerry will have proposed major health care plans. Dick Gephardt already announced his plan this week and says it will be the cornerstone of his campaign. Just as Kerry is threatened by Dean in Kerry's must-win state of New Hampshire, Gephardt is threatened by Dean in Gephardt's must-win state of Iowa. Gephardt's new health care plan, which expands the kind of coverage currently offered by employers (through a new tax credit) and by the government (through opening up Medicare and the SCHIP program), is similar to what Dean has

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outlined but may actually more comprehensive—and more expensive—placing Gephardt to the left of Dean on the issue.

The other candidates, especially Lieberman and Edwards, neither of whom is expected to win in Iowa or New Hampshire, seem delighted by the prospect of a titanic battle between Dean and Kerry. "Dean could slay Kerry for us," says an aide to a rival campaign. Without the burden of having to win in the two early states, both Edwards and Lieberman are elbowing for advantage in what might be called the February 3 strategy. That's the first primary day after New Hampshire, and, while it originally was to be monopolized by South Carolina, now Arizona and Missouri are also scheduled for that day, with Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Tennessee preparing to move there as well. Aides to both Edwards and Lieberman envisage a strategy where their candidates do respectably in Iowa and New Hampshire but then break out with victories on February 3. Lieberman was an early adopter of Arizona as an important state and has made frequent trips there. He also pushed Oklahoma to move its primary up and recently sent his wife to the state, where she collected almost every important Democratic endorsement. A linchpin of the strategy for Lieberman is that his high name identification and moderate record should serve him well on a day of multistate primaries with diverse Democratic constituencies. However, the plan is also premised on a fat bank account to fund several state campaigns at once, and Lieberman's fund-raising to date has been abysmal.

The February 3 strategy may actually make more sense for Edwards, the fund-raising champion who, as a Southerner, may be positioned to do well not just in South Carolina, where he has to win, but in the other states that will hold their contests on that day as well. A senior advisor to another campaign scoffs at the idea that Lieberman will appeal to the largely rural voters who go to the polls then: "Lieberman's got endorsements in Oklahoma, but, when it comes to Oklahoma voters—." There is a long pause. "Enough said." ■

Sadr City Dispatch

Slumlords

BY PETER MAASS

A FEW DAYS after American troops entered Baghdad, I went to Saddam City, a sprawling slum inhabited almost exclusively by Shia Muslims. But, by the time I got there, Saddam City was gone. Yes, the people were still there, as was the poverty—the kids playing barefoot soccer on dirt lots and the young men carrying AK-47 assault rifles. But it was Saddam City no longer. THIS IS SADR CITY, announced a spray-painted sign as I drove into the slum, renamed for Sheik Mohammed Sadek Al Sadr, who was killed along with two of his sons in 1999 for speaking out against Saddam Hussein. Another sign welcomed me to REVOLUTION CITY.

My first stop was the local hospital, which was surrounded by gunmen and presided over by an imam who refused entry to my colleagues and me. Our next stop was a nearby mosque, but the gunman at the entrance told us we could not speak to the imam and told my interpreter that Western journalists only tell lies. We then went to El Hekmah, the main mosque in the slum. The gunmen there were not warm, either, though a mid-level cleric agreed to speak with me outside the mosque for a few minutes. He told me they were under orders not to talk to journalists. As we chatted, a stream of stern-faced imams came and went, all of them surrounded by the sort of no-nonsense gunmen with whom you do not mess unless you have a death wish.

Although Iraqi police and American troops had begun foot patrols in other parts of Baghdad, they were nowhere to be seen in Saddam/Sadr/Revolution City. That's true throughout Shia population centers in Iraq. In Karbala, which contains the holiest Shia shrines, and Najaf, home to the main Shia seminary, the imams are in control. The gunmen are theirs, the hospitals are theirs, the banks are theirs, the streets are theirs. They have filled a vacuum, and they have lost no time in letting their long-repressed followers know that there is no reason to thank the American invaders and that the time has come to build an Islamic republic. This is one of the ironies of post-Saddam Iraq: The people who are happiest that Saddam is gone are eager to see the departure of the American troops who got rid of him. While the invasion of Iraq has accomplished many good things, it has also let loose the genie of Shia fundamentalism, the same strain that swept through Iran when Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini came to power there. In the coming months, we'll probably find out if secular Shia can stand up to the fundamentalists. But, for now, the fundamentalists are in charge—in Sadr City and beyond.

A DAY AFTER I was turned away from the El Hekmah Mosque, one of Iraq's most powerful and radical Shia imams, Muhammed Fartousi, spoke at a prayer meeting there. He warned Iraqis to no longer indulge in the bad Western habits they acquired in recent decades, such as drinking, going to discos, singing, and dancing. Throughout Iraq, radical Shia clerics are delivering similar messages. These have been a long time coming. Although more than 60 percent of Iraq's population is Shia, Saddam is Sunni, and his regime was dominated by Sunnis. The Shia were horribly repressed, and more so following their failed uprising in southern Iraq after the Gulf war twelve years ago. That failure, and Saddam's subsequent crackdown that

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killed tens of thousands of Shia, not only deepened Shia discontent, it embittered them toward the United States, which was seen as having encouraged the rebellion and then doing nothing to help it succeed.

From the perspective of Iraqi secularists, the only thing worse than Shia clerics taking power is a struggle for power among them. The other day, I had lunch at a Baghdad restaurant with a prosperous Shia businessman, and, when I asked, over kebabs, hummus, and mint salad, what most worried him, he replied with two words: civil war. Not between Sunnis and Shia, but among Shia. After telling me that he listens to the Doors and the Moody Blues and then reciting some of their lyrics, he said he would not stick around if the clerics begin fighting among themselves. "I will leave the country," he said. "I will go to England. I can sell carpets there."

The businessman used the word "fanatics" to describe the fundamentalist imams. But, right now, there is no one he trusts. The U.S. government, or at least the Pentagon, appears to want the political vacuum filled by Ahmed Chalabi, the opposition leader who has lived in exile for the past 45 years. Chalabi was flown into Baghdad on a U.S. military plane just a few days ago but appears to have little support here because many Iraqis see him as an interloper in the pocket of the U.S. government. When I asked what he thought of Chalabi, the businessman just laughed.

Generally speaking, two movements are emerging among Shia fundamentalists, who represent the only organized force among the Shia and whose religious celebrations this week have pulled in large crowds. The more radical one is known as the Sadr movement, named after Al Sadr, the upstart sheik killed on Saddam's orders whose followers have renamed Saddam City in his honor. One of his surviving sons, Sayyid Muqtada Sadr, who is 30 years old, has taken up his mantle and is urging his followers to delve into politics to achieve their goal of an Islamic state. The other faction, considered more moderate, is led by Iraq's most senior Shia cleric, the Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani. Sistani shies away from political action, viewing it as beneath his religious status. His son, however, acting as his spokesman, has said that American troops are not welcome in Iraq and should leave. That's not good enough for Sadr's followers: A group of them surrounded Sistani's home shortly after the regime collapsed and demanded that he leave the country because he had been insufficiently active in the struggle against Saddam. The standoff was defused, but the split remains, and it is an uneasy time for many clerics. In Najaf, two moderate imams were killed by a mob shortly after Baghdad fell. Sistani has been in hiding, as has Sadr.

In the best of scenarios, there will be no civil war and the clerics will stay in their mosques or, if they venture into politics, will share power with secularists and representatives of Iraq's other religious and ethnic groups. The slogans I saw in Saddam/Sadr/Revolution City included this hopeful one: SHIA, SUNNI, KURDS, CHRISTIANS, WE ARE UNITED. WE ARE ALL IRAQIS. The problem is that revolutions, like invasions, often begin with good words and fine intentions and then move in other directions. ■

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Jerusalem Dispatch

Local Victory

BY YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI

DURING THE OSLO peace process, Natan Sharansky, the Soviet dissident turned politician, was a lone, even eccentric, voice on the Israeli right. Where others on the right condemned Oslo for betraying historic claims or vital security needs, Sharansky attacked it for betraying democracy. By imposing dictatorship on the Palestinians, he argued, Israel was repeating the mistake made by Western democracies that sought stability by accommodating rather than challenging communist regimes. Sharansky's insistence that Israel's territorial concessions be linked to Palestinian democratic reform was dismissed by both the left and right as the archaic thinking of a Soviet immigrant who didn't understand the Middle East.

But, with the fall of Saddam Hussein, Sharansky, who now serves as minister in charge of diaspora affairs, believes he has been vindicated. "Iraq will be the first experiment in exporting democracy to the Arab world," he says. "Israel is the only country in the region that has experience in building democratic institutions, and we should offer our help."

How to offer that help, of course, is no simple matter. Even Sharansky acknowledges that Israel must proceed with caution: "This isn't the time for diplomatic initiatives with Iraq. If Israel wants to destroy the credibility of an Iraqi leader, it should publicly embrace him." Aside from one lapse—the announcement, quickly rescinded after Jordanian protest, by an Israeli government minister that he was seeking to revive the pre-1948 Iraqi oil pipeline that ran through Jordan and ended in Haifa—the low profile that Israel maintained toward Iraq during the conflict is continuing. Israel has even continued to shun Ahmed Chalabi. Though the Iraqi exile leader has repeatedly affirmed his support for diplomatic relations with the Jewish state and visited the country in the late '90s, few Israeli officials have agreed to even meet with him, accepting the CIA's assessment of his marginality. "Chalabi has gotten

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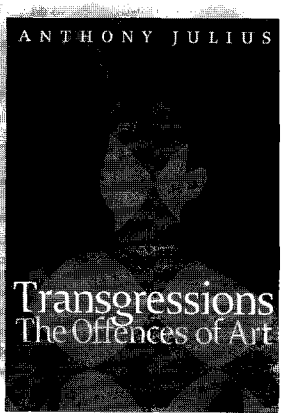

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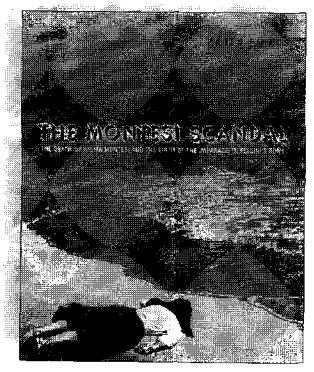

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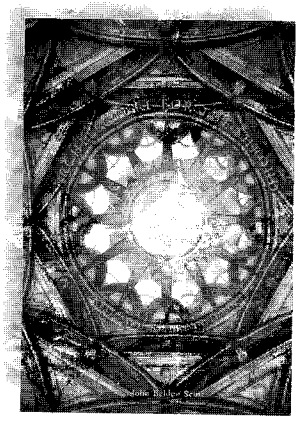

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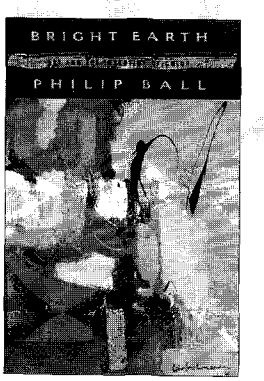

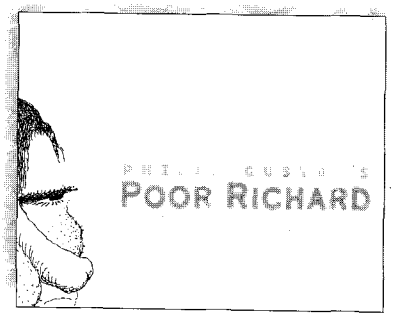

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no help from Israel," bemoans the Hudson Institute's Max Singer, who has tried to bring Israeli officials together with Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress.

Those Israelis who do envision close Israeli-Iraqi ties tend to focus their hopes outside government. One such group is the Iraqi Jewish community, both in Israel and the diaspora. About a quarter-million Jews of Iraqi origin live in Israel, and they are among the most successful and well-integrated of any community of Jews from Arab countries. When Iraq stabilizes, predicts community leader Mordechai Ben-Porat, many expatriates will be keen to travel to Baghdad and to probe business opportunities there. "Rather than frighten Iraqis with talk of diplomatic relations with Israel, we should be approaching them as former Iraqi Jews," says Ben-Porat. "Israel should come through the back door." He notes that Iraqi Muslims once valued Jews as business partners and as accountants: "One Jew who left Baghdad not long ago told me about a garage mechanic who refused to accept money from him for repairs because his father told him how much Jews had helped build Iraq. We will be able to do things there others can't."

New alliances could also involve unofficial contact with the Al Khoei Foundation, which until recently was led by the leading Shia proponent of interfaith relations, Abdel Majid Al Khoei. The foundation represents several million Shia around the world and opposes Khomeinite Shiism. Abdel Majid Al Khoei, who was recently murdered in Iraq, possibly for his support for the U.S.-British coalition against Saddam, "saw his role as helping reconcile Islam and other faiths," says David Rosen, an Israeli rabbi who heads the American Jewish Committee's interfaith department and who was friendly with the murdered leader. "His attitude toward Jews was very positive. He knew I was Israeli, and that didn't matter." Among the books listed for sale on the foundation's website is one titled *Islam Denounces Terrorism*, which rejects any justification for terror in the name of the faith.

BUT, DESPITE ALL these hopes of eventual normalization between Iraq and Israel, no one here is celebrating yet. That's not only because of uncertainty in Iraq but because the post-Saddam Middle East poses new dangers for Israel along with new opportunities. The most immediate fear is that the road map meant to revive the peace process will omit key Israeli concerns, such as insisting that the Palestinians commit themselves not just to a cease-fire but to uprooting the terrorist infrastructure. Then there's Iran, Israel's greatest long-term fear because of its well-developed nuclear program. The war with Iraq, notes a senior security source, may have convinced the mullahs in Iran to intensify their nuclear program: "Their conclusion is that, if Saddam had nuclear weapons like North Korea, he would not have been attacked." What's more, no one here is ruling out the possibility that Syria's Bashar Al Assad may wait for U.S. pressure to subside and then reactivate Hezbollah, which has an estimated 10,000 rockets and missiles aimed at the Galilee. Israeli analysts see Bashar as a dangerous combination of inexperience and ambition who may seek to replace Saddam as the new rejectionist hero of the Arab world.

Still, for Israel, this is a time of reprieve. To begin with, there's relief at the disappearance of a potentially existential threat. Last fall, a leading member of the defense establishment here told me that, if the Americans didn't topple Saddam and prevent him from going nuclear, the Middle East might not survive. And the end of Saddam's largesse has undermined Palestinian terrorism: Iraqi subsidies for the intifada—an estimated $35 million, ranging from $10,000 for the families of those killed in clashes with Israelis to $25,000 for the families of suicide bombers—have been suspended. The collapse of the only Arab regime that dared to attack the Israeli home front in the last three decades has helped restore Israeli deterrence, which many here believe began to erode when Israel refrained from retaliating against Iraq's 1991 Scud attacks. Given that much of the Arab world identifies Israel with the United States, America's victory in Iraq is seen as a surrogate Israeli victory.

But the most important gain for Israel is that, for the first time since 1948, there is no longer a threat of an "eastern front," that is, a Syrian-Iraqi military alliance. In all its wars with Israel, Syria relied on Iraq for backup. During the 1973 Yom Kippur War, for example, Iraqi reinforcements were so crucial that Syria nearly reconquered the Golan Heights. One result of the collapse of the eastern front will be financial: The army is contending with severe budget cuts imposed by the country's economic crisis, and removing the Iraqi threat could help the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) reduce the size of its troops. Similarly, while Ehud Barak's willingness at Camp David to cede the Jordan Valley (the West Bank's eastern border with Jordan) shocked Ariel Sharon almost as much as Barak's concessions on Jerusalem, military strategists may no longer see that territory as essential to Israel's defense. Israel's fear has long been a joint Syrian-Iraqi invasion through Jordan. Now, without Iraqi backing, the antiquated Syrian army poses little conventional threat.

Finally, the projection of U.S. power in Iraq could have far-reaching psychological consequences among the Palestinians. In recent months, a new word has been added to the IDF's lexicon: "consciousness." Everyone, from the chief of staff to intelligence officers, invokes the "consciousness" of the Palestinians as a measure of the army's success in its war against terrorism. The IDF believes Israel's goal of convincing Palestinians that terrorism is counterproductive—a message reinforced by the fall of Saddam and America's stiffened resolve against terrorism in the Middle East—is about to be realized. True, the terrorists are still mobilizing: Since the beginning of Passover last week, the army arrested seven terrorists actively planning suicide attacks. But, thanks to this kind of crackdown, suicide bombings are down to what Israelis call, without irony, a manageable level of terrorism. (While more than 40 major terrorist acts occurred in the first quarter of 2002, there were only five in the first quarter of this year.) Most of all, the emergence of a camp headed by Abu Mazen, which opposes Yasir Arafat's terror strategy, is seen by the IDF as proof of victory in the war for Palestinian consciousness. "It's a victory

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without trumpets," says Dan Schueftan, a Middle East expert close to the IDF. "The generals fulfilled the extremely difficult mission of shoring up Israeli morale while demoralizing the Palestinians and fighting terrorism in very complicated terrain. You can say that we've won. At least this round."

That grim optimism defines the Israeli mood today. The tape has been scraped from windows in the sealed rooms, and gas masks have been put back into storage. Unlike last Passover, which began with the Netanya seder massacre, during which 29 people died and which kept most Israelis indoors throughout the holidays, this Passover Israelis crowded the Galilee's nature reserves, where, after a long drought, winter rains have restored dried-up rivers and waterfalls. Hezbollah missiles were just over the border, but Israelis weren't about to allow that to interfere with their first foray into a new Middle East. ■

Amman Dispatch

Victim Complex

BY HASSAN FATTAH

When Saddam Hussein's army went to war with the United States, it took the hopes, fantasies, and myths of the Arab world into battle with it. Iraq was to play one of two historically sentimental roles, both richly resonant in Arab politics. And, in so doing, it would serve as the vehicle for people from Saudi Arabia to Morocco who yearned for an Arab champion, or at least for a glorious, redeeming defeat.

The preferred role was triumphant defender of Arab honor against the imperialist threat. Many in the Arab world believed, because they so much wanted to believe, the wild assertions of Iraqi Information Minister Muhammed Said Al Sahhaf, who pooh-poohed U.S. advances and promised the toughest battle the United States had ever seen. They watched Arab media lionize the Fedayeen Saddam and decry Iraqi civilian deaths. And they cheered as unexpected resistance slowed advancing American troops.

Soon, the war began going America's way. But, even then, Arabs simply projected Iraq into a second, similarly honorable role: as the new martyrs, unbowed even against overwhelming odds. Iraq became the new intifada, complete with suicide bombers and wanton death and destruction at the hands of an infinitely more powerful army. For an audience that had grown used to the grinding cycle of tit for tat, the images were easy to comprehend. America, the powerful marauder, was raiding an Arab land, and Iraqis, the victims, would resist the occupation to the death. Much like the Palestinians, who have stood up to the Israeli army for 55 years, the Iraqis would gain dignity in defeat. "I don't think anybody doubted the outcome," says Amman-based political commentator Khairy Janbek, "but I think everybody expected the Iraqis to give Americans a bloody nose. ... What they expected was a kind of Arab pride, an Arab bravery, an Arab masculinity."

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Now these expectations have been dashed. It's not just that Iraq lost with breathtaking speed. Worse, many Iraqis seemed to delight in the defeat—embracing the imperialist Americans as preferable to their Arab oppressor. The scrambling of the script has produced Arab bewilderment and now, as that bewilderment subsides, a strange new emotion: resentment at the Iraqis for letting the Arab world down. Explains Cairo University political science Professor Mohammad Kamal, "People are disappointed that there are Iraqis who didn't appreciate the efforts and emotional involvement of the Egyptians. 'If those are the Iraqis,' they say, 'then maybe they don't deserve any of the support we gave them.' " Says Tariq A. Al Maeena, commentator for the English-language Saudi website *ArabNews*, "There is a great deal of disappointment that the Republican Guard did not put up a credible fight in defense of Baghdad."

Nowhere has the Iraqi failure been more symbolic, and more infuriating, than in the West Bank and Gaza, long the centers of Saddam's propaganda machine and the primary recipients of his financial largesse. In the wake of Baghdad's April 9 fall, many came to Bethlehem to pay their condolences to the relatives of Imad Hubani, a young Palestinian who grew up in Amman and who had volunteered to fight in Iraq and was killed in battle. Yet, as villagers poured through, most expressed their regret that the young man had given his life for nothing.

For many Palestinians, who saw Iraq's fight as analogous to their own, the images of Iraqis welcoming American soldiers were unbearable. The concept that Saddam had simply fled was even more so. And soon, many began looking at the Iraqis as traitors. "These are not the Iraqis that I knew," lamented Mohanna Shbatt, an activist with the Arab Liberation Front, the Palestinian branch of the Baath movement. Shbatt had studied in Iraq and looked to Saddam as the only true Arab leader still in power. He carried Saddam's flag in Gaza for years and, just two weeks earlier, had helped dole out about $35 million of Saddam's money to families of Palestinian militants and civilians killed in the intifada. After the fall of Saddam, Shbatt went silent for three days, unable to speak to anyone. "What the Iraqis destroyed [in the looting] was greater than what the war destroyed. In the end, they have made their own decisions. ... It will probably take a month or two, and then they will wake up. And I think they will regret all those days lost." "Everybody felt personally defeated," explains Mahdi Abdul Hadi, head of the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs in Jerusalem. "People expected steadfastness and willingness to stand up. How could Jenin [the refugee camp] stand up to all

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that bombardment, how did [Yasir] Arafat stand up to the siege in Ramallah for all these months, but Saddam couldn't stand up to the invasion of his country?"

But many Iraqis, gripped by a wave of newfound nationalism, feel just as betrayed by their fellow Arabs as the Arabs feel by them. When Saddam fell, hundreds of Iraqis living in Jordan gathered in Amman's Hashemite Square, cautiously congratulating each other and quietly arguing about the implications of what they saw on television. "We have not been living. We have not been able to survive," said Hadi, a 28-year-old Iraqi who asked that his last name not be used. Notes Janbek, "We got used to the idea that the Iraqis are victims, but now we see Iraqis turning against the Arab world because they haven't done anything for them but appease Saddam. I don't know how long it will last. But it will have an effect."

An effect, perhaps, in changing the Arab world's view of itself. Even as Arabs shake their heads in disbelief over the Iraqis' behavior, some are beginning to wonder whether they may have something to learn. Editorials have begun discussing ideas once unheard of in the Arab press, and Arab leaders are being asked questions they never expected. For example, "If there is to be progress in the Arab world, the intelligentsia must stop gazing at the past in the futile hope that it can solve the problems of the present," wrote Khaled Al Maeena, editor-in-chief of *ArabNews* on April 18. "If we want to achieve such a society, we cannot go on blaming others for our own inadequacies. We have to rise to the occasion. Instead of constantly pointing our fingers elsewhere, we should take a long, good hard look at ourselves and call what we see by its proper name."

"At the end of the day, people are saying that we have to speak our mind. There's not going to be obedience [to rulers] as before," says the Palestinian Abdul Hadi. "This has been a lesson to every Arab regime that they need to look to their people. If a storm comes from outside, the only way to stand is to have a constituency." And which Arab leader is truly confident about his? ■

The Bushies two plans for Iraq.

Split Decision

BY ELI J. LAKE

Last week, an Iraqi exile named Mohammed Mohsen Zubaidi strode into Baghdad and declared himself mayor, meeting with local sheiks and promising them potable drinking water and electricity. "With your help, we can manage our country by ourselves," *The Washington Post* quoted him as saying. Barbara Bodine, the former U.S. ambassador to Yemen who has been tapped for administrative responsibility over Iraq's capital, was forced to tell reporters that the United States did not recognize Zubaidi's authority.

But Zubaidi isn't the only one eager to fill the power vacuum left by the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. Last week, both Ahmed Chalabi, a senior member of the Pentagon-backed Iraqi National Congress (INC), and his old rival Ayad Allawi, who leads the CIA-backed Iraqi National Accord, also arrived in Baghdad. Both major Kurdish parties have set up offices there as well. In Mosul, a Kurd affiliated with one of those parties, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), declared himself mayor of the city, sparking riots by the townspeople. Representatives of Ayatollah Mohammed Bakr Al Hakim, the head of the Iran-based and -funded Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), have started to assemble large crowds in Basra, Karbala, and Najaf.

"It is vitally important," says Barhim Salih, the prime minister of the Regional Kurdistan Government, "that an interim national Iraqi authority is established very soon and that it assume responsibility for maintaining law and order and provide public services while preparing for elections as soon as possible." But, while Salih is undoubtedly right, it's unclear whether he'll get his wish. That's because the Bush administration is as divided over how to replace Saddam's regime as it was over how to topple it. There is not one U.S. plan to create an interim Iraqi government but, rather, two competing ones—one backed by the Pentagon, the other by the State Department and the National Security Council (NSC)—and this bureaucratic infighting is sowing confusion, delaying reconstruction, and leaving the political field largely open for the worst kind of anti-Western, anti-democratic leaders to rise.

For his part, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz is pushing a plan that would rapidly establish a new government by merging a council of Iraqi leaders elected by exiles at a March conference in the northern Iraqi city of Salahuddin with "internals," the Bush administration's term for Iraqis that have endured Saddam's tyranny (see "The Wasteland," page 18). The NSC and the State Department, on the other hand, would like to sponsor a series of town meetings with internals and exiles—like the one held outside of Nasiriya in Ur on April 15—culminating in a large conference in Baghdad, in the hope that Iraqis on the inside, rather than exiles, will emerge as viable leaders for the transitional regime.

Ironically, the Salahuddin conference that produced the leadership panel Wolfowitz would like to empower was, at the time, considered a victory for the State Department, which used the opportunity to marginalize the INC, the one-time umbrella for the Iraqi opposition. In Salahuddin,

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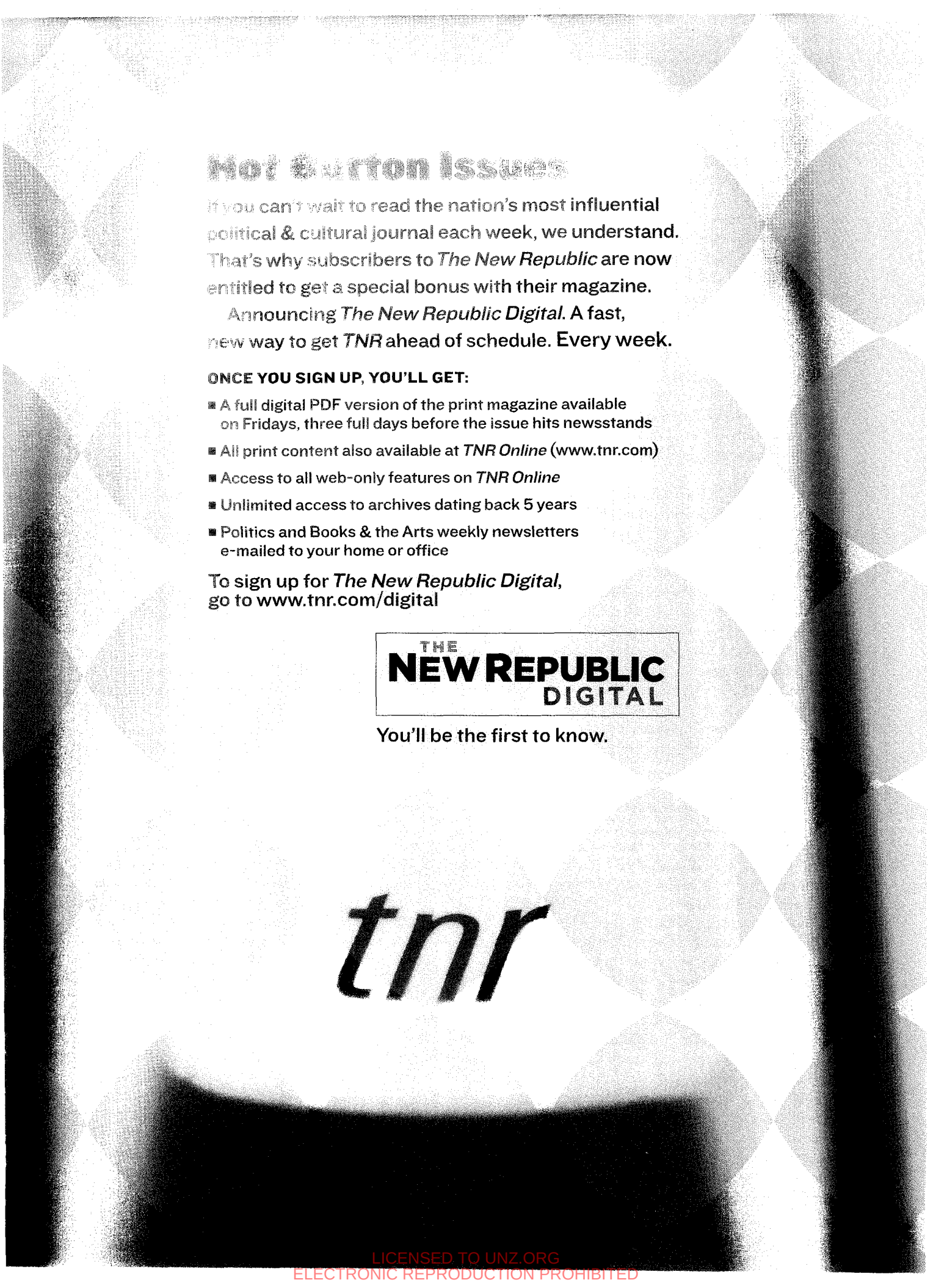

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the INC was only one of numerous opposition groups that it had once held under its wing, including SCIRI and both major Kurdish parties. Alongside Chalabi, delegates to the conference chose Allawi, an ex-Baathist who has received clandestine funding from the CIA since the early '90s; Abdul Aziz Hakim, brother of Mohammed Bakr Al Hakim, whose militia is trained by Iran's military; and the leaders of both Kurdish parties, Jalal Talabani and Massoud Barzani. The sixth member of the leadership committee was Adnan Pachachi, an octogenarian former Iraqi foreign minister living in the United Arab Emirates who has been courted by the Saudis and, more recently, by Zalmay Khalilzad, the president's special envoy to the Iraqi opposition. (Pachachi and Allawi have been unclear as to whether they are still a part of this group, making it essentially a group of four and leaving it Sunni-less for now.) The Pentagon plan calls for the group of four to help choose Iraqi internals and develop a power-sharing arrangement to lead an interim authority with input from Washington.

Under the State Department plan, by contrast, everything that happened in Salahuddin would be moot. Foggy Bottom argues that the only way to have a transition authority that will command legitimacy from the Iraqi people is for the selection of this new government to stem from local meetings of both internals and externals. The major difference between this and the Pentagon plan is timing and composition. The Pentagon strategy would establish the interim authority in the coming weeks, while the State Department plan would likely take much longer. Under the Pentagon's procedure, exile leaders would play a significant role in choosing the Iraqis on the inside; while, under the State Department proposal, leaders would emerge from a series of these local meetings, conferring on them legitimacy through what appears to be a democratic process.

But the legitimacy issue is tricky. While the 80 or so tribal sheiks, ex-officials, and representatives of exile leaders that met in Ur signed a declaration opposing the external imposition of leaders, everyone who attended the gathering was essentially invited by Washington. And, like the intense feuds over the exiled opposition that preceded the war, the administration fought over whom to invite to the Ur meeting. The CIA, for example, proposed many former Iraqi officials and local tribal leaders who had been quietly helpful in the war effort and requested that their names not be made public. The Pentagon, meanwhile, argued for full disclosure and recommended different participants suggested by Chalabi's people. The Bushies could not even agree on who was supposed to lead the town meeting. As the president's point man in the reconstruction process for Afghanistan, Khalilzad argued that he had the necessary experience to head the American delegation. Pentagon civilians, worried by Khalilzad's fondness for Pachachi, insisted the American side be led by Jay Garner. In the end, both attended.

It is unclear exactly what, if anything, the Ur event and any subsequent town meetings will add up to; they may go the way of the Salahuddin conference. There is still no consensus inside the Bush administration on whether there will ultimately be a transition conference in Baghdad. Potentially confusing matters further will be the arrival in Baghdad in the coming weeks of a "governance committee," cobbled together by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State (and vice presidential daughter) Elizabeth Cheney, who previously oversaw reform in the Palestinian Authority. It's purpose, according to one administration official, will be to monitor how the various new Iraqi ministries are conforming with the overall vision for a democratic Iraq from the White House.

IN THE MEANTIME, both the Pentagon and the CIA are doing everything they can to confer tactical advantages on the Iraqis they favor. Before coalition forces even got to Baghdad, the Pentagon airlifted Chalabi and some 700 of his fighting men to Nasiriya from northern Iraq, giving the former math professor a leg up on his political rivals by making him one of the first exile leaders on the ground inside liberated Iraq. In addition, the Pentagon and key senators successfully pressured the State Department to release $4.2 million initially intended to establish a free Iraqi TV station in London to go directly to a separate account to support Chalabi's activities in Iraq. Meanwhile, the same week that Chalabi was flown to Nasiriya, the CIA released a classified report to senior American officials on the political prospects of exile leaders—claiming, among other things, that Chalabi lacked popular support on the ground in Iraq.

These internecine policy battles have paralyzed the important work of establishing a pro-American Iraqi presence on the ground. Iran has been broadcasting its Arabic-language satellite television, known as Alam, into Iraq since before the war started. But it was only last week that the United States put a satellite TV station for free Iraqis on the air—and only after Radio Sawa, the U.S. pop-music station established last year, agreed to do it. Initially, the TV station was supposed to be run by a separate group headed by Iraqi exiles and American technocrats, but plans to run the station were slowed down by the administration's various policy quarrels. As it stands, the NSC has been brought in to solve questions as basic as which broadcasters the new interim authority should be allowed to employ. "We are woefully behind in planning," one American official in the thick of these discussions told THE NEW REPUBLIC. "There is too much micromanagement. We need to give someone the go-ahead to help organize things like a police force now."

With every week that passes, the United States could be losing the battle for influence on the ground. In Najaf, Sayyid Muqtada Sadr, the heir to perhaps the most prestigious clerical line in Shiism, drove his religious rival into hiding by threat of force. In the eastern city of Baqouba, militias trained by Iran's Revolutionary Guard stormed into the city last week and executed men they accused of being Baathists. And Iranian intelligence agents have reportedly already infiltrated the Shia neighborhoods of the Iraqi capital and are organizing Islamist parties. We can only hope the Bush administration establishes an interim authority before they do. ■

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What I saw when I went home.

The Wasteland

BY KANAN MAKIYA

I HAVE JUST returned from southern Iraq. It was the first time I had set foot in that part of my country since 1966. Back then, I used to accompany my father, dean of the School of Architecture in the University of Baghdad's College of Engineering, while he led groups of his students on tours to study the architecture of the south. Two years later, a coup brought the Baath Party to power, eventually leading to the rule of Saddam Hussein.

I was both elated to be back and heartbroken at what I saw this time in the wake of the tyrant's downfall. What I remembered so vividly as an alluring, fertile, and irrigated landscape is now a war-ravaged, endless stretch of desert. Children begged me for water bottles wherever I stopped on the six-lane stretch of highway built to carry Saddam's tanks during the Iran-Iraq war. Saddam persecuted the Marsh Arabs, residents of the south, relentlessly and, through upstream damming and downstream drainage, dried up the area that biblical scholars consider the site of the Garden of Eden. I knew these things in theory during my exile. But I could not fully understand the wasteland Saddam had created until I felt desert winds whip sand across my face.

Yet, there was another sense in which the landscape was deeply familiar. In a surreal way, the Beltway has transported its bureaucratic wrangling halfway around the world. I came to Iraq last week to attend a conference at Ur, near Nasiriya, of 80 Iraqis to discuss the postwar political situation. The meeting, held in the supposed birthplace of Abraham, yielded a broad consensus among the Iraqi participants: In the immediate term, we need law and order, humanitarian assistance, and an all-Iraqi, secular political authority. Yet many, if not most, of the decisions necessary for implementation of these goals remain deferred, victims of what is known in Washington as the "interagency process." Competing agencies—the State Department, the CIA, the military's Central Command (CENTCOM), and the Pentagon—have different agendas for postwar Iraq, and, therefore, different Iraqis whom they seek to promote. These warring agendas have stalled the distribution of aid and the promotion of security and have led to what every Iraqi I have spoken with considers his or her deepest fear: anarchy.

In Iraq, the world's most powerful military has crushed the hated rule of a despot. When U.S. Marines reached Baghdad, Iraqis cheered. Barely two weeks later, however, what Iraqis see before them is a foreign army that has de facto control over their country but has not facilitated the reconstitution of basic order. There is a naïve belief stalking some corridors of power in Washington today that, since the United States has liberated Iraq, it can now stand aside and let 100 flowers bloom. This, supposedly, is democracy. Iraqis have no idea what to make of this bizarre conception. And, as confusion and disorder grow, creating a power vacuum, some of the most dangerous and illiberal groups in Iraq are amassing power.

THE SEVERITY OF the problem hit me when I entered Iraq last Monday. Along with some colleagues from the Iraqi National Congress (INC), I was riding with a convoy from Kuwait and transporting supplies to the 700 fighters of the Free Iraqi Forces (FIF) based outside of Nasiriya, supervised by Ahmed Chalabi of the INC. No sooner had we crossed the border than we were besieged by hordes of children. They were desperate for water and food, standing in the road so we couldn't drive past without heeding their pleas. Never have I felt so conflicted. I soon found myself in an exchange with one young boy who had to be convinced I was a fellow Iraqi. I had been gone for more years than he could comprehend. I found myself telling him about the schools I had attended, the family I came from, the books I had written. One of his friends started pointing at the military supplies we were hauling and musing aloud about what he'd like to have. The crux of the problem was that, in the absence of my ability to help them (I could not empty the vehicle of supplies), they grew suspicious, and then hostile. How, after all, can someone powerful enough to drive in a convoy be powerless to provide food or water? This, I realized, is how they see the United States.

Hours later, we made it to the FIF camp—"camp" being a squalid warehouse with no water or electricity among a veritable junkyard of rusty, blown-up military vehicles. The FIF are yet another case study in how the logjam in Washington has hindered security inside southern Iraqi towns. The 1998 Iraq Liberation Act provided money to train resistance fighters for a battle against Saddam. But years of State Department resistance to the idea prevented such training until late last year, when the administration began courting Iraqis in exile for basic training in Hungary. While the Iraq Liberation Act

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provided for the training of thousands of Iraqis, in the end only about 100 went through the breakneck Hungary course. As a result, Chalabi, upon his return to Iraq in January 2003, began recruiting an Iraqi militia—the FIF—that he knew would be needed once the war began. Because of the campaign against him by both State and the CIA, however, CENTCOM, which has now taken command of Chalabi's recruits, has not authorized an expansion of this woefully small force.

The forces, limited though they may be, provide a unique asset to the U.S. effort—native Iraqis who better understand local culture and can effectively communicate with their countrymen about how to root out Baathist paramilitary fighters, such as the Fedayeen Saddam. Already, the FIF played a role in apprehending one of Saddam's main aides, Mohammed Hamza Zubaidi, who helped oversee the suppression of the 1991 uprising. As the war has turned into a police effort, the need for Iraqis to assist the United States has increased. General Tommy Franks recognized this when he saw the vulnerability of his forces to fedayeen attacks in southern cities. It was only when Franks requested assistance that U.S. warplanes ferried 700 FIF, provided by the INC, from the INC's base in Salahuddin on April 4.

Press accounts of the airlift suggested that the Pentagon was sending Chalabi, its favored Iraqi puppet, into southern Iraq as a way of anointing him the successor to Saddam. Yet the decision to send in the FIF was a military one, made by Franks. When Franks identified his military need, only the INC was prepared to supply him with fighters. And the FIF reflect their impromptu conscription: Less than half of them have any recent military training, and they have been less than abundantly equipped. If this force is meant to establish political facts on the ground, it is hardly in a strong position to do so, at least at the moment.

The FIF, however, is an example of what needs to be done on a much larger scale. Currently, no means of providing law and order in Iraq's cities exist—a small but critical step on the road to a democratic Iraq. CENTCOM has repeatedly said that its ongoing combat requirements supercede any police function it might possibly provide. As a result, looting has happened under the noses of American fighters, prompting confusion among Iraqis who want order and do not understand why heavily armed Americans cannot provide it.

The lack of civil authority has been accompanied by a remarkable mistake by CENTCOM: It has allowed the eastern border of Iraq to remain open. As a result, thousands of people have been trucked into Iraq from Iran in recent weeks, mainly to provide support for hard-line Shia clerics who have stepped into the power vacuum and are rallying shocked Iraqis around them. As a result, new radical Muslim groups are developing local support, surpassing in power the older, longstanding fundamentalist group Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI). If American forces, helped by Iraqis, had shut the eastern border, policed Baghdad and southern cities, and helped restore law and order, this could have been avoided. Even now, there is still time: If the United States moves to close the border with Iran and checks entrances to Baghdad and other cities, they can reverse this dangerous influx. But time is short.

The absence of civil authority has also had an effect on American forces. In the south, I encountered few checkpoints, and people were free to go as they pleased. Consequently, soldiers appeared nervous, constantly fingering their weapons because they feared some of the Iraqis moving around might want to hurt them. In an unfamiliar country, unable to speak the language, confronted by occasional outbursts of anger, they are poorly equipped to distinguish friend from foe and are wary of becoming targets.

IN MEETINGS WITH senior administration officials in Washington on the eve of the war, I was astonished at the lack of planning for the postwar situation. The Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) was created in January and did not move into the region until the shooting had begun, leaving retired General Jay Garner, head of ORHA, and his staff to arrive and acclimate even as coalition forces liberated towns and cities in the south—areas they are now responsible for. Interagency gridlock between the State Department, the CIA, and the Pentagon left the composition of Garner's staff uncertain until this month. A few days before I left for Iraq, I read in *The New York Times* a quote attributed to an unnamed senior Defense Department official about postwar policing that seemed to sum up the administration's attitude toward the entire project of rebuilding Iraq: "The military piece will be in place from Day One, and the other pieces will fall in behind."

Not only are all the "other pieces" not falling in behind, they have yet to be told exactly where and how they should fall. The different humanitarian aid agencies have yet to begin operations outside of a few southern areas because CENTCOM does not believe the majority of the country is safe enough to begin distributing food, water, or medicine. Although Garner visited Baghdad and the north this week, ORHA is still operating from Kuwait. With all the confusion over how to stabilize Iraq, in some areas—Karbala and Najaf, for example—the military appears content to allow self-selecting city councils to maintain order. But the military is not coordinating with these councils to ensure that police forces are not merely the tools of clerics or other local leaders. If the military does not take a more proactive stance to allow liberal Iraqis to take control of the security situation, a vicious circle will be created wherein the resumption of basic social services cannot occur, prompting frustrated and hungry Iraqis to turn to violence, further diminishing security and stymieing aid efforts. Ultimately, the way out of the cir-

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cle is to move quickly to an interim political arrangement in which Iraqis take control of their own country, providing law and order and coordinating with the coalition for aid and reconstruction. And the quest for such an arrangement is what brought me last week to the birthplace of Abraham.

I CONFESS, I had my doubts about the conference. For one thing, I felt it should have happened weeks ago, as soon as Nasiriya was liberated. The State Department, the Pentagon, CENTCOM, and ORHA had vigorous arguments about the structure, place, and attendees of the conference, delaying the gathering until after Baghdad fell. Fine, then, I thought, we should move it to Baghdad, for symbolism. But Nasiriya had been discussed for a long time as the site for the conference, so Nasiriya it was. Worse, the military wanted to use the nearby Tallil Air Base to host the meeting, which would have sent a terrible message about all of us being American lackeys. Luckily, someone thought better of it, and so the conference was moved to Ur, and a large tent was pitched inside the old city, near the ancient ziggurat, the central monument.

The location of the conference was not the only subject of internecine Beltway strife. One of the main worries about the conference was the attendance, and promotion, of leaders, either tribal leaders, the "internals"—what the CIA and State think of as the genuine Iraqis who remained in the country during Saddam's rule—or the often-vilified leaders of various exile groups. Eventually, these tribal leaders will have to be dealt with. Their existence is a fact. But they do not have the depth of historical support that some in the administration think: In recent years, they were essentially bought by Saddam, making them more powerful in the 1990s than ever before in Iraqi history but also compromising them in the minds of many Iraqis. But the fact that many tribal leaders are being promoted by the CIA as being more legitimate than exiles is a point that, for now, the Bush administration prefers not to face. For example, in February, in the northern city of Salahuddin, the various opposition groups elected a six-man leadership committee, comprising Chalabi, former Foreign Minister Adnan Pachachi, Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi National Accord (INA), Muhammed Bakr Al Hakim of SCIRI, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan's Jalal Talabani, and the Kurdistan Democratic Party's Massoud Barzani. It was a major achievement, binding together a fractious opposition. We had been told by State for nearly a year that we needed to unite to play a role in postwar Iraq, and we delivered. Yet elements in the U.S. administration chose not to deal with this reality on the eve of the war, pretending the committee didn't exist.

Some 80 Iraqis assembled at Ur on Tuesday morning. The late arrival of several coalition delegations kept us from starting on schedule, and so we were entertained with food flown in from Kuwait. The coalition delegates delivered gracious opening speeches before proceeding with the meeting's two speakers: Hatem Mukhlis from Tikrit, followed by myself. Mukhlis is a member of the Iraqi National Movement, a group largely comprising former army officers from Saddam's regime, and he is beloved by the State Department.

Once the meeting got underway, it became clear there was much cause for optimism. There were absolutely no divisions between the so-called internals and the so-called exiles. The incommensurability of these two sets of Iraqis has been an article of faith inside the State Department and the CIA, and it was wonderfully reassuring to find the prediction fall on its face. To be sure, the problem may arise in the future. But I believe that those of us who have spent significant chunks of our lives abroad must realize that, in public life at least, we have important but temporary roles to play in Iraqi politics. We exiles have lived outside Iraq, have gotten experience in democracies, and have been able to reflect on the destruction of politics within Iraq. We have a duty to bring this experience and viewpoint to the table. But we must do so with humility and, in the short term, with the recognition that those who have lived in Iraq must eventually gain the experience they need to emerge politically.

All of us agreed that the most important task at hand is the maintenance of law and order by an all-Iraqi interim authority. The unity held when we voted on a more potentially contentious item: the need for de-Baathification and the course it should take. I advocated a de-Baathification program based on a legal process, much like a truth-and-reconciliation commission, where levels of complicity in the criminal regime are assessed and treated accordingly. The motion passed with only two dissenters—Mukhlis and another CIA favorite, Nouri Badran of the INA. To see both tribal sheiks and Londoners agreeing on de-Baathification was a victory.

Another cause for optimism was Garner. Though he was hosting the meeting, Garner chose not to speak until we Iraqis had finished our debates. When he finally did address us, he spoke without notes, telling us directly and plainly that he needs us to take the leading role in rebuilding Iraq and reaffirming his commitment to leave when we no longer feel a need for his assistance. "He really means it," a businessman from Mosul said to me after the meeting ended. "This man is the genuine article."

Indeed he is, but he is only one component of a very complex and inertia-riddled decision-making process. For the sake of Iraqi democracy and U.S. security, Washington needs to immediately stop putting off the difficult decisions about Iraqi political authority. The difficult choice the United States has to make is between effectiveness and representativeness. If it wants to create an effective peace in Iraq that can pave the way for a liberal constitution and elections, it needs to allow a liberal Iraqi leadership to emerge, stay involved in Iraq (rather than moving troops out), close the border with Iran, and promote a group of Iraqis—both exiles and internals—who can serve as a police force and eliminate the security vacuum that exists today and benefits the Islamists. If it favors instant representativeness—the appearance of allowing all Iraqis, no matter how incapable and illiberal, to quickly have a role in politics—if it reduces its troop presence, if it does not foster law and order, it will leave the country in a chaos that breeds the worst kind of intolerant politics. I did not return home for that. ■

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Intentions

THE GUYS
(Focus)

THE GOOD THIEF
(Fox Searchlight)

TEMPTATION FOR A WRITER lurks behind catastrophe. Whenever something dreadful happens in the political world, writers are tempted to respond. When Hitler appears, when the atomic bomb makes its double debut, some playwrights and novelists are impelled to respond in their art. Film writers are not immune, though for intrinsic reasons of their medium, their response is not so quickly apparent.

The impulse of these writers is more than understandable: the lack of it would be moribund. But, shaken by horror, they do not always consider whether they have anything to add to the subject. The point is not whether they have more facts—who would expect that of them?—but whether they can deepen in some way our experience of the event. The flood of emotion in those writers usually sweeps away such questions.

Anne Nelson's play *The Guys* was presented Off-Broadway some months after September 11. It is a memorial to the hundreds of New York firefighters who were killed in the World Trade Center cataclysm. Nelson made her memorial a two-character play, and a number of well-known actors took turns in playing the two people. Everyone concerned obviously wanted to affirm their grief at the event and their respect for the consequent heroism. Now **THE GUYS** has been filmed, directed by Jim Simpson, who directed the play and co-wrote the screenplay with Nelson. The two actors are Sigourney Weaver (who is married to Simpson) and Anthony LaPaglia.

Weaver plays a writer. LaPaglia is the captain of a Fire Department company who must speak—who wants to speak—at the funerals of the eight men in his company who were lost at the Trade Center. He cannot compose anything adequate; Weaver, who has just met him, agrees to help. The bulk of this eighty-five-minute film consists of the captain's memories and descriptions of those men—most of them, anyway—which are then arranged by Weaver in speakable form. At the last we see LaPaglia deliver one of the elegies in a church.

The blunt trouble with *The Guys* is that we don't in any way need it. Moments in it are moving, of course, in the way that the obituary notice of any good life is moving. But Nelson's writing, as arranged by Simpson, adds absolutely nothing to our experience of September 11. Worse than that, it isn't even explicitly about September 11, which is hardly mentioned. As far as this script is concerned, those eight men could have died in a factory fire or a traffic accident.

Simpson has directed sensitively. He is especially acute in the use of space. Occasionally there are shots outside the rooms where most of the film takes place, but Simpson knew that this one setting, which helped to compact the play, could confine the film, and he has used compositions and editing that keep the film from feeling hobbled. LaPaglia, presumably with Simpson's help, plays with a sensitivity to phrase and inflection that he has not always shown. Weaver, intelligent as usual, never lets the character's honesty become egregious. More, she can do what actors don't always do well: she knows how to listen. But Nelson's play is only the result of that perennial temptation for writers. It merely attests that she is a member of the shocked community to which all of us already belong—and we have reasons more complex than any that she presents.

Neil Jordan is, willy-nilly, building a career out of pathos. This Irish director, obviously a man of serious ambition, keeps making films that ought to be more effective than they are and that leave us feeling a bit sorry for him. Of the Jordan pictures that I have seen, *The Crying Game* is the best. About the love of a soldier for a man he thinks is a woman, it explored some delicate areas of feeling, and it was a complete, finished piece of work. But Jordan often chooses a subject that promises much and then breaks the promise. Graham Greene's novel *The End of the Affair* ought to have made a good film, but Jordan's distorting screenplay and directing left it flat. The project that seemed most apt for this Irish director was *Michael Collins,* especially since Liam Neeson was to play Collins. Yet despite the admirable Neeson, the result was fuzzy. And now Jordan has chosen to re-make *Bob le Flambeur.*

An interesting idea. The French original, done in 1955 by Jean-Pierre Melville, is a cool, ironic film noir that, in its rejection of traditional cinematic upholstery, is now considered a forerunner of the New Wave. (Melville was an exemplar to many directors in that wave.) Jordan has adapted the Melville screenplay, has directed, and has called it **THE GOOD THIEF.** But it isn't.

The silhouette of the original is visible. A world-weary thief, here made an American in France, has retired from crime and now spends his time and money in two ways: gambling and drugs. Funds are getting low, so when he is invited to join in the robbery of a casino in Nice, he pulls himself together and accepts. Also involved is a quite young girl to whom he becomes a sort of father-and-lover. But Jordan has loaded the stark original with lots of trite dialogue and plot excrescences. The result is so burdened with murky counterpoints that the story, particularly as it gets to the heist, is just confusing.

Three elements are notable. (Not the new actress who plays the girl; she is dull.) Nick Nolte, as Bob, endows the screen with his hulking corrugated presence and his exultation in it. Nolte has sometimes done some remarkable acting—for instance, in that post-O'Neill New England drama *Affliction*—and he has also sometimes merely ambled through lesser films. Here he does neither. He apparently had little interest in Bob as a character, but he takes the picture seriously enough that his film-weathered personality, seemingly full of secrets and resource, keeps us more attentive than the plot does.

The score by Elliot Goldenthal mutters ominously throughout. And the cinematog-

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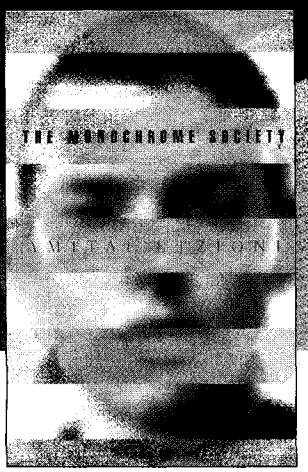

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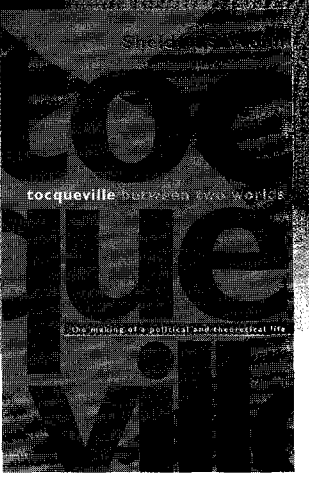

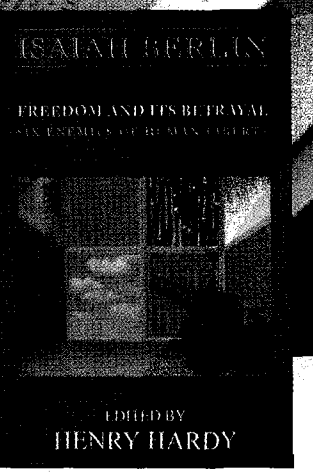

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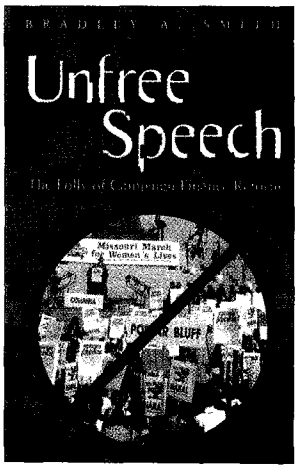

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raphy by Chris Menges, who did *Michael Collins,* is virtuosic. The effect is most distinctly not Melville's noir: Menges gives the film a range of color and lighting that is too subtle for the material.

It's not the differences from Melville's original that hamper Jordan's film. It's the lack of clarity and intent. No one could doubt what Melville was after: a transmutation into the visible of spare hard-boiled prose, the American prose of which France was so enamored at the time. But Jordan's intent is not clear. Did he want to update Melville in a temperamental and textural sense? Intriguing as that plan might be, the result looks only like Melville wrenched out of context. *The Good Thief* merely adds a new tinct to the pathos of Jordan's career. Once again we see a director who is better than anything he has so far done. ■

JED PERL ON ART
Everyday Symbolist

SYMBOLISM, AN APOTHEOSIS OF personal expression that swept through all the arts at the end of the nineteenth century, marked Europe's final break with the classical humanism of the Renaissance. The struggles for romantic independence that had animated artists, writers, and musicians in France, Germany, and England for more than a hundred years emboldened the Symbolists to follow their sensations wherever they might lead. Their sense of freedom, defined in the poetry of Rimbaud, Verlaine, and Mallarmé, flooded the visual arts, so that in the decades around 1900 Redon, Gauguin, Bonnard, and Vuillard were able to magnify their tiniest apprehensions until they took on an uncategorizable emblematic power. And these artists in turn helped to forge a new public for art, a public that rejected an earlier vision of painting and sculpture as instruction in favor of a new vision of art as seduction.

ÉDOUARD VUILLARD: POST-IMPRESSIONIST MASTER
National Gallery of Art; Montreal Museum of Fine Arts

A century has come and gone since the Symbolist revolution, and I think it is safe to say that sophisticated audiences, when given a choice between learning and succumbing, will still elect to be seduced. With its impassioned struggles to turn the ordinary into the extraordinary, Symbolism remains a sensibility that is very close to our hearts. The Symbolist adventure stretches from the third quarter of the nineteenth century to the years between the two world wars, and it continues to dominate our experience in much the way that the achievements of Raphael and Dante dominated earlier centuries. Symbolism embraces the ecstatic distortions in Degas's later pastels of dancers as well as the vast, almost bejeweled impressions of water lilies that Monet painted in the 1920s. It finds expression in the enveloping, quickening sonorities of Ravel and Mahler, in the condensed dramatic dance poems of the Ballets Russes, and in the atmospheric fictions of Virginia Woolf. Seurat's pointillism has a Symbolist dimension, as does the color in Matisse's Fauvism. The classicism of Mondrian or Stravinsky, which gives an ideal of order an almost mystically personal import, can be seen as an extension of Symbolist experience. And the aftershocks of Symbolism are felt deep into the twentieth century, in Nabokov's crazily, craftily elaborate metaphors and in Balthus's studies of young women gilded by the light that drifts through a nearby window.

The Symbolists re-adjusted all the predictable relationships between the sublimity of art and the ordinariness of life. And while the subtlety of their transformations—which are by turns playful, arresting, and disturbing—can still leave their art feeling difficult, their genius for turning vagrant thoughts and momentary perceptions into visual and aural extravaganzas has affected every area of the arts, high and low. To the extent that the contemporary audience is far more interested in floating meanings than in fixed meanings, it is possible to argue that Symbolist taste has become the taste of our time. By now we are aware that Symbolism's ecstatic particularity can all too easily degenerate into middlebrow easy listening and easy looking. And yet there is nothing trivial about our desire to engage with artists as intimates rather than as exemplars. We still want to discover meanings and morals, but we now take it for granted that such revelations will frequently be buried, blurred, disguised. We take it for granted that we are going to feel before we think. We want to fall under the spell of art.

THE PAINTINGS OF ÉDOUARD Vuillard, gathered together in a retrospective that has been at the National Gallery in Washington and now moves to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, are among the pinnacles of Symbolist experience, a melting together of lifestyle and artistic style that has a rapturous, once-upon-a-time power. Vuillard, who was born in 1868 and died in 1940, spans the entire Symbolist period. In his early years, often working on formats scarcely more than a foot high, he was at once a documentarian and a dreamer, summoning up the pattern-filled interiors in which he and his family and friends passed their days. Going through the early galleries of the Vuillard retrospective, looking at these incredibly luminous interiors, with their candy-box density, their chocolate and mocha and caramel colors, we are caught in a great tumble of sensations. These compositions that Vuillard did when he was not yet thirty are among the treasures of museums around the world—harbingers of abstraction that simultaneously look back to the interiors of de Hooch and Vermeer and define a romantic notion of bohemian-tinged bourgeois comfort that has been the epitome of chic from Vuillard's time down to the shelter magazines of our own day.

If Vuillard's name has never become as widely known as that of Bonnard, another Symbolist of the quotidian with whom Vuillard had a lifelong friendship, it is probably because Vuillard was inclined, especially after the turn of the century, to cultivate a subdued tonalism and a taste for descriptive detail that many came to regard as out of sync with the drift of modern art. At the very beginning of his career, working with Bonnard and Maurice Denis, Vuillard was a central figure among the group of artists who called themselves the Nabis (after the Hebrew word for prophet). They wanted to push the already intensified color of Post-Impressionism into nearly abstract effects, and in the standard histories of modern art it is as a Nabi that Vuillard is still primarily remembered. Although the Museum of Modern Art gave Vuillard a full retrospective in 1954, the extraordinary variety that the artist brings to his autumnal lights and shades has never

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been embraced in America as wholeheartedly as Bonnard's sublimely idiosyncratic counterpoint of high-keyed color.

There may be nothing in Vuillard that can finally match the heights that Bonnard reached in such late masterpieces as the *Studio With Mimosa* and the cycle of paintings of his wife Marthe in her bath, works that were included in "Pierre Bonnard: Early and Late," a fine retrospective that closed at the Phillips Collection in Washington on the very day that the Vuillard retrospective opened across town. And yet it is a mistake to regard Vuillard as a less daring Bonnard. The people who describe Vuillard that way often have only a dim understanding of what he actually accomplished. Many of his large paintings travel rarely if at all, since they were executed in distemper, a medium with a glue-based binder that cracks and flakes very easily and cannot withstand the wear and tear of a touring show. Vuillard was obviously attracted by the wonderful matte surfaces that he could achieve with distemper, somewhat like a fresco surface. Yet the delicacy of these paintings has meant that even when they are on view, they are generally exhibited behind a sheet of protective glass, which turns their complexly worked, delicate, almost sandy surfaces into slick tricks.

At the time of Vuillard's retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art, Fairfield Porter wrote that "we have not yet caught up with the extreme sophistication of his successes." Nearly fifty years later, this is still true. What we can say is that the work of catching up with Vuillard has now truly begun. This retrospective, which also travels to Paris and London, was organized by Guy Cogeval, the director of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Cogeval is also responsible for the Vuillard catalogue raisonné, which appears this spring. While the presentation in Washington was not perfect—especially in some of the later galleries, the work was overhung—all in all this was an impressively relaxed and lucid exhibition. The first time I saw the show, I was overwhelmed by the easygoing intensity of Vuillard's effects, by his genius for slipping from strikingly close observation into a kind of fanciful speculation without losing the sureness of his painterly touch. Returning to take another look, I began to feel Vuillard's reach, his nerve, a largeness of spirit, a critical sense that pushed him beyond the miniaturist's gifts of his early years into the expansive decorative spirit of his work in the last years of the nineteenth century.

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The largeness of Vuillard's ambitions is one of the essential themes of this exhibition. In the decorative panels that he painted for the homes of adventuresome collectors as the nineteenth century was dying, Vuillard finds ways to project the slightest, most enigmatic shades of feeling on a very grand scale. Many of these multi-panel decorations, which depict moody interiors, dappled parks, crowded street scenes, and farmland vistas, were eventually dispersed: Vuillard's patrons tended to change partners and domiciles and generally enjoyed turning their lives inside out. We know more about these works through the work of Gloria Groom, a curator at the Art Institute of Chicago who published the important *Édouard Vuillard: Painter-Decorator* in 1993, and organized "Beyond the Easel: Decorative Painting by Bonnard, Vuillard, Denis, and Roussel, 1890–1930" in Chicago and New York a few years ago. Through the work of Groom and now Cogeval, museumgoers are having extraordinary opportunities to see some of these unusual decorative cycles, with their strangely elongated formats and their initially confusing but ultimately exhilarating integration of monumental ambition and decentralized, fractured subject matter.

The secret of Vuillard's success in these large decorative ensembles may be that he refuses to take command of them all at once. He regards the decorative impulse as essentially additive, incremental; he has obviously studied medieval tapestries, eighteenth-century French decorative arts, and classical Japanese screen painting. He wanders through a space, mastering it as he goes. The result, in *The Public Gardens* (1894), *The Album* (1895), *Île-de-France Landscape* (1899), and *Five-Panel Screen for Miss Marguerite Chapin; Place Vintimille* (1911), is a meandering resplendence. In *The Public Gardens,* with its pale tones, the mood is one of mild grandeur. Vuillard treats each clutch of children with the amused avidity that Watteau, in the decorative panels that he completed early in his career, devoted to a curlicue or a swag. He gives us pageantry without brassiness. In *The Public Gardens,* he is tickled by things: a child's way of bending over to play, a woman's hat, the shadow cast by a tree. He is certainly interested in the painting of everyday life, but he may be even more interested in celebrating his own everyday visual fecundity.

Although one of the greatest decorative cycles devoted to Parisian home life, *The Vaquez Panels: Figures in an Interior* (1896), did not come to Washington, the show did contain the magnificent *Album,* also known as *Five Panels for Thadée Natanson,* in which Vuillard saturates the full-to-the-brim apartments of fin-de-siècle Paris with broodingly intense ruby and amethyst tonalities. There is something almost shockingly slow-moving about these luxuriant scenes, in which the beautiful women and the great bouquets of flowers, picked out in creamy, pearly whites, have an obsessional power. They are spectral visions of a hothouse world. The effect is reminiscent of the layered magic of some eighteenth-century Japanese kimonos, where a surface is first elaborately batiked in full color and then adumbrated with embroidering, so that certain elements in the design take on a redoubled importance. The result, in Vuillard's paintings as in the Japanese textiles, is a startling luxuriousness. And yet in Vuillard's *Album* there is none of the preening self-consciousness that mars so much of the Art Nouveau taste of late nineteenth-century Europe. Vuillard is exacting about his indulgences; there is an unflagging precision to his velvety excess.

COURTESY NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

ÉDOUARD VUILLARD, *The Salle La Caze,* 1921

Vuillard, who never married, counted among his intimates some of the most attractive and adventuresome women of the day, including Misia Natanson, the wife of Thadée Natanson, who was editor of *La Revue Blanche,* and Lucy Hessel, the wife of Jos Hessel, an art dealer who represented Vuillard. Misia is the princess at the center of the fairy tale that is Vuillard's art, a fairy tale in which self-knowledge can sometimes seem to be indistinguishable from the knowledge of beauty. This woman, with her soft, angelic face, was still a teenager when she married Thadée and presided over the high bohemian world that centered around *La Revue Blanche,* a magazine that was published throughout the 1890s and that counted among its contributors Mallarmé, Gide, Proust, and Toulouse-Lautrec. Misia was a gifted pianist, and she was the only woman present when Debussy gave the first piano presentation of *Pelléas and Mélisande,* singing all the parts himself. She was painted by Bonnard, Vuillard, Toulouse-Lautrec, and Renoir (who begged her to show him more of her breasts, a request that she later regretted having refused). When Vuillard painted her, the result was often not so much a portrait as a painted prose poem, with Misia's face obscured so that the outline of her body might become an image of pure vitality. Among Vuillard's photographs are several of a summer house that Misia and Thadée shared, and you can feel in its whitewashed walls and its rustic furniture and its elegant spaces one of those re-definitions of chic that were second nature to these people.

It is easy to forget how young Misia and Thadée and their friends were around the turn of the century, mostly in their twenties and thirties. They have the watchfulness of adolescents, lapping up experiences and not quite knowing where sensualism ends and indolence begins. Vuillard gives their luxurious lives a precise psychological value, and who can doubt that his subjects, the people who paid his bills, knew exactly what he was doing? These spoiled bohemians had known him first as the chronicler of his mother's hard labors as a seamstress, and they would continue to support him later on, when he created portraits with a steely precision that perfectly matched the disabused spirits of the 1930s. Vuillard's art may be all surfaces, but he knows how to penetrate to the surfaces beneath the sur-

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faces. In his sensitive writing in the exhibition catalogue, Cogeval skillfully points out how the tensions between Vuillard's sister Marie and his good friend Ker Xavier Roussel, a notorious womanizer who married Marie and caused her considerable pain, are limned in the early paintings. In Vuillard's later work there is sometimes a feeling that the lights have been turned up a little brighter; it's as if everybody has finally entered the workaday world.

THE SENSUOUSNESS OF DAILY life would always be Vuillard's favorite subject, but for museumgoers who are enthralled by his way of playing with the fabric of appearances, the eventual drift of his work toward an increasingly plainspoken naturalism can be disturbing. Some have argued that as Vuillard's fame grew and he accepted commissions from people whom he did not know especially well, he could not prevent his work from becoming regularized and programmatic. But we should not be too quick to conclude that Vuillard is letting us off lazily in these later works, in which he insists on bringing each detail to a consistently high level of finish. Certainly the portrait of Jeanne Lanvin, the legendary couturier, painted in 1933, is an awesome achievement. This extraordinarily complex pictorial construction deserves to be counted as one of the great gambles of mid-twentieth-century art. Vuillard has painted Lanvin at work in her sleek Art Deco office, seated behind a huge black lacquer desk. The orchestration here of blacks and grays and greens is mild yet decisive. And the hand of a master is evident in the contrast that Vuillard draws between the shimmering appointments of the luxurious office—the writing implements at the ready, the chrome hardware, a sculpture in a glass case—and the delicate articulation of Lanvin's face. There is an aureole of authority around this middle-aged woman, whose wide-awake eyes and arched eyebrows form the lyric center of a tough-minded composition.

The impersonality in Vuillard's later work is a conscious choice. He is experimenting with the possibility that his Symbolist magic can be generated through the very intensity of his visual anecdotes. While the crazily blooming color in Bonnard's later canvases suggests the detachment of feeling from representation in the poetry of Mallarmé, the pile-up of detail in Vuillard's later paintings parallels the effects in Henry James's final novels, where impressions are so thoroughly worked up that experience thickens, becoming sometimes almost static. Many readers have found in the saturated atmospheres of *The Wings of the Dove* and *The Golden Bowl* not the freedom of sensation that James surely meant to suggest but something closer to a loss of free will. That is a risk you take when you succumb to the immensity of sensory experience. A late Vuillard confronts us with a related dilemma. Vuillard risks telling us too much; like James, he risks an ecstatic bafflement. Cogeval describes Vuillard's late paintings as neoclassical in spirit, but they are probably better understood as a re-examination of nineteenth-century naturalism in the light of Symbolist experience—as a celebration of the strangeness of naturalism itself.

IN HIS LATE WORK VUILLARD IS still exploring some of his earliest themes. And in the fascinating suite of paintings devoted to the galleries of the Louvre that he painted between 1921 and 1922, even as he is documenting the look of certain galleries in the great museum after World War I, he is also giving us a climactic reflection on the teasing relationships between art and life that had preoccupied him since the 1890s. Where once Vuillard had suggested that the everyday life of Paris might have some of the heraldic richness of medieval decoration or some of the aristocratic delicacy of an eighteenth-century Parisian boudoir, he now takes us into the galleries of the Louvre and finds those lost medieval and rococo worlds amid the ordinary experience of museumgoing. Working for a Swiss industrialist, Vuillard devoted six panels to the theme of the museum and the museumgoer. He dedicated large canvases to rooms full of French art of the Middle Ages and the eighteenth century and to Greek sculpture and ceramics. There are also two smaller panels, representing the mantles in Vuillard's own studio, piled with Japanese prints, a cast of the Venus de Milo, and other classical objects; these elongated horizontal compositions suggest the kind of personal museum that artists collect in their workrooms.

The retrospective includes the two small panels, and *The Salle des Cariatides,* dominated by a huge stone urn, and *The Salle La Caze,* with paintings by Chardin, Watteau, and Largillière hanging on the walls. Vuillard's magnificent canvases, in which delicately observed museumgoers are dwarfed by the masterworks that fill the galleries of the Louvre, are unlike anything else in modern art: what he has done is to turn the treasures of a great museum into the protagonists in his scenes from contemporary life. While Vuillard was working on these

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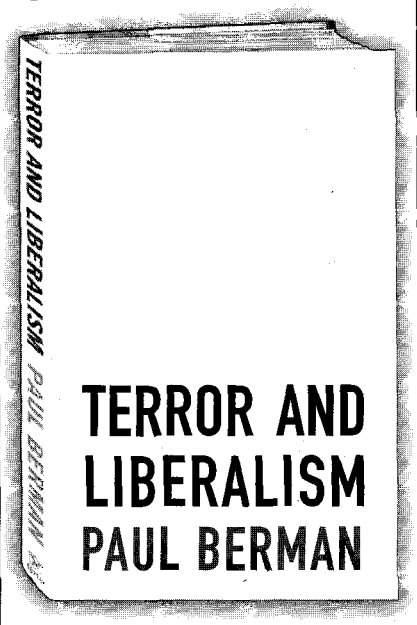

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paintings, he found himself thinking about Degas's studies of Mary Cassatt in the Louvre, and there is certainly a tradition of painting art-filled environments, going back to Watteau's *Shopsign* and still earlier. At the same time, Vuillard's Louvre proves to be an utterly contemporary museum, in that it is a public space in which magically private experiences can take place. These paintings provoke large philosophical questions, the kinds of questions that Adorno raised in his famous essay "Valéry Proust Museum," in which he juxtaposed Valéry's sense of the Louvre as all "cold confusion" with Proust's description of "the exhilarating happiness that can be had only in the museum, where the rooms, in their sober abstinence from all decorative detail, symbolize the inner spaces into which the artist withdraws to create the work." In Vuillard's Louvre cycle, the art on the walls becomes a magnification of the appetites and the ambitions of the men and women who fill the gallery, some of whom are copying the paintings, some of whom are merely there to look.

The Salle La Caze, one of Vuillard's most daring compositions, is dominated by the vast gallery wall, a dusky red surface hung with masterworks, a wall that Vuillard has angled a bit back from the plane of the canvas so as to create a narrow pocket of air—the air that the museumgoer breathes. If the Louvre series can be interpreted as an allegory of the history of the arts, covering painting, sculpture, and the decorative arts and the classical, medieval, and modern periods, then *The Salle La Caze* is the canvas in which we confront painting, the most modern of the arts. By focusing on a wall that includes Chardin's *Jar of Olives* and Watteau's *Nymph and Satyr,* Vuillard is saluting the two eighteenth-century painters who rejected the essential artistic assumptions of their own century, when the academic authorities believed that art must be instruction, and thereby inaugurated the modern vision of art as sublime seduction.

Both Chardin and Watteau prefigure the glorious meltdowns of Symbolism, Watteau in his high-stakes transformation of figure composition into the dream-play of the *fête champêtre,* Chardin in the earth-shattering expectations that he brings to representation itself. And once we have recognized the place that Watteau and Chardin hold in the pre-history of Symbolism, *The Salle La Caze* turns out to be not so much an evocation of an ordinary day at the Louvre as a Symbolist exposition of the artistic entanglements without which Vuillard surely felt that life was not worth living. Here his subject is not so much luxury as necessity—the necessity of art, which for the Symbolist becomes life's ultimate justification. Vuillard is the everyday Symbolist—the man who knows how to pull startling epiphanies out of familiar experiences. When he takes the Louvre as his subject, Vuillard is saluting a place where the miracles of art and the everydayness of life are wonderfully mingled. A realist may be able to describe a museumgoer's passionate engagement with the art of the past, but only a Symbolist, Vuillard wants to remind us, can turn these close encounters into mystical unions. ■

Helen Vendler
When Poets Made War

POETS OF WORLD WAR II
Edited by Harvey Shapiro
(Library of America, 262 pp., $20)

I ONCE HAD OCCASION TO READ through the whole run of *The Criterion,* the quarterly edited by T. S. Eliot from 1922 to 1939. What most chilled me, as I read, was the absolute acquiescence of all the contributors—editorial writers, essayists, reviewers—in the certainty of imminent war. Everyone knew it was only a matter of time before World War I would be followed by the next great war. "If everyone knew it was brewing," I naïvely thought at the time, "surely something could have been done to avoid the war?" Apparently not. Even with the terrifying mutual slaughter of World War I before everyone's eyes, a new war came on unavoidably. Historically, that conflict has generally been considered a "good" war. Like all wars, it produced a literature of its own.

The poetry that Harvey Shapiro has collected (under the misleading title *Poets of World War II*; it should read *American Poets of World War II*) is the poetry of victors. Bitter discoveries such as those made by the English poets of the first war, men who saw their old ideas of gallantry dishonored by gassing and trench warfare, do not figure prominently here. World War II, as Howard Nemerov said, was "the war in the air," in which hand-to-hand fighting was replaced by bombing. To American eyes, the greatest horror of the war emerged from the German extermination camps, and the experience of the camps was not strictly an American one. The poetry of the American winners, on exhibit in this volume, lacks for the most part the mordant awareness that necessarily pervades the poetry of the defeated. In Emily Dickinson's epigrammatic words,

> Not one of all the Purple Host
> That took the Flag—today—
> Can tell the Definition—so clear—
> of Victory—
>
> As he—defeated—dying—
> On whose forbidden ear—
> The distant strains of Triumph
> Burst—agonized—and Clear!

A German or Russian or Japanese collection called *Poets of World War II* would look distinctly different from Shapiro's collection. Can a war be adequately represented if the voices of the defeated are excluded? Someone should devise a comprehensive anthology of World War II poems from all countries represented in the conflict, from England to Japan; it would be a sobering volume.

But the Library of America has worthily established the "American Poets Project"—"a compact national library of American poetry"—and so this book must confine itself to American writing. Many of the poets here lacked direct experience of combat. The educated often found themselves behind the scenes as staff officers (Robert Fitzgerald), in intelligence (Edgar Bowers, Edward Weismiller), in communications (John Pauker, Peter Bowman, Hayden Carruth), instructional services (Richard Eberhart, Hyam Plutzik, Randall Jarrell), or in entertainment (Alfred Hayes). Their service to the country was no less, but they were less likely to become "war poets." Women, even when they were members of the armed services, were not allowed into battle. There are no poems here—so far as I can see—by writers who were killed or permanently disabled (paraplegics, amputees, the mentally ill). There is a relative absence of guilt in these pages, perhaps because so much killing was carried out invisibly, by bombers or artillery far from their targets. Not much is said about the

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enemy as vulnerable human flesh. No glance is turned toward the families of the enemy dead. Perhaps only the greatest poet-soldiers can imagine themselves inside the skin of their victims.

For various reasons, many poets writing during the war years are absent from this collection: among them are Theodore Roethke, Charles Olson, Robert Hayden, Delmore Schwartz, Theodore Weiss, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Donald Justice, and A.R. Ammons. It may be that they did not write about the war, even if they served in the military. (Ferlinghetti was in the Navy, serving with the Free French and the Norwegian underground; Ammons, after he finished high school, served on a ship in the Pacific—where, as he told me, he wrote his first poems—but so far as I recall he did not comment on that period in his verse.) Many poets did not see military service, owing to age (Stevens, Jeffers), conscientious-objector status (Robert Lowell, William Stafford, William Everson), medical deferments (John Berryman, Weldon Kees), or psychiatric discharge (Robert Duncan, discharged when he "declared his homosexuality").

The biographies appended to Shapiro's collection reveal that a significant number of well-known poets, besides Ferlinghetti and Ammons, did serve in combat, and thus contributed profoundly, quite apart from their writings, to our history. These include:

Ben Belitt (Army Signal Corps)
William Bronk (Army)
Charles Butler (Army)
John Ciardi (16 combat missions over Japan as a gunner in a B-29)
James Dickey (38 combat missions in a P-61 fighter-bomber from the Philippines and Okinawa)
Alan Dugan (Air Force mechanic in the Marianas)
Edward Field (Air Force heavy bomber navigator, with 25 combat missions over Europe)
John Haines (naval radar operator on a destroyer in the Pacific)
Anthony Hecht (infantry rifleman, combat in Germany and Czechoslovakia)
Richard Hugo (B-24 bombardier, 35 combat missions over central Europe)
Kenneth Koch (infantry rifleman, in combat on Leyte)
Stanley Kunitz (Air Transport Command)
Thomas McGrath (Army Air Force, Aleutian Islands)
Samuel Menashe (infantryman in France, Belgium, Luxemburg, and Germany)
William Meredith (naval pilot, Aleutian Islands and Hawaii)
Howard Nemerov (naval pilot, RCAF and RAF, over North Atlantic and North Sea)
George Oppen (infantry anti-tank company in the Vosges, Alsace, and Germany)
Karl Shapiro (medical corps clerk, South Pacific)
Louis Simpson (infantryman in Airborne Division in France, Holland, Belgium, and Germany)
William Jay Smith (liaison aboard Free French ships in the Pacific)
W. D. Snodgrass (naval service, Pacific)
Lucien Stryk (Army)
Peter Viereck (Army, North Africa and Italy)
Richard Wilbur (signal company of infantry, Italy, France, and Germany)

And—to bring this list to a close (bafflingly, *Poets of World War II* contains no alphabetical index of authors)—the editor of this anthology, Harvey Shapiro, whose army service was spent as a B-17 radio gunner, with thirty-five combat missions over central Europe. The frontispiece to *Poets of World War II* is a photograph of a cocky twenty-one-year-old Shapiro in 1945, in full flying gear, broadly smiling in front of his plane, presumably after completing one of his combat missions. The snapshot is a robust reminder of the degree to which novice soldiers are protected, by their youth, from too much reflection on their actions. (Memory may later correct the jauntiness, as it does in the poems of his own that Shapiro includes.)

Although Shapiro expands his anthology by including poems by women and civilians, the heart of the collection is surely the poetry written by men who actually found themselves in the armed services (including those who were not sent into combat). Perhaps these latter had a keener sense of what the war meant, not having to erect within themselves the psychological defenses necessary if one was to drop bombs. The inhuman fratricide of war, seen from the outside, provokes Richard Eberhart's classic but philosophically incoherent protest in "The Fury of Aerial Bombardment." I call it incoherent because it

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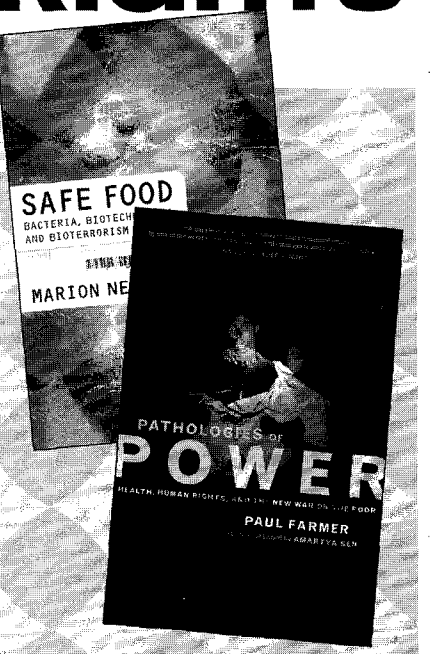

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embraces two incompatible positions. The first is a distanced and reflective one that sees in each soldier another Cain:

> You would think the fury of aerial
> bombardment
> Would rouse God to relent; the
> infinite spaces
> Are still silent....
>
> You would feel that after so many
> centuries
> God would give man to repent;
> yet he can kill
> As Cain could, but with multitudinous
> will....

As if conscious of the inefficacy of regarding war from God's distant position, Eberhart, bending close, adopts a different vantage point and mentions dead young soldiers by name, seeing them now not as Cains, voluntary killers, but rather as stumbling schoolboys being processed into a new kind of learning:

> Of Van Wettering I speak, and Averill,
> Names on a list, whose faces I do not
> recall
> But they are gone to early death,
> who late in school
> Distinguished the belt feed lever
> from the belt holding pawl.

Such a poem tries to have an ethics (soldiers as killers) and forget it too (soldiers as innocents). There lurks a vague sense that those conscripting the boys and making them into bombardiers are the real criminals; but the ease with which schoolboys are converted into soldiers willing to unleash "the fury of aerial bombardment" rather blunts the moral point.

Internal conflict such as Eberhart's between a philosophical view and a personal one, or between a guiltless memory and a guilty one, can pose a problem to war poetry. The problem can be solved in various ways: a soldier-poet can distance himself from his own actions and reflect on war in general; he can be guileless and anecdotal, or guilty and anecdotal; or he can sternly face, as one who participated in it, the general irrationality of war. There are good poems here of each kind. In "Mined Country," Richard Wilbur meditates, with philosophical distance, on the sinister aftermath when fields have been sowed with mines:

> Danger is sunk in the pastures,
> the woods are sly,
> Ingenuity's covered with flowers!
> We thought woods were wise
> but never
> Implicated, never involved.
>
> Cows in mid-munch go splattered
> over the sky;
> Roses like brush-whores smile from
> bowers;
> Shepherds must learn a new language;
> this
> Isn't going to be quickly solved.

For the most part, however, the poems Shapiro has chosen are little short stories in verse, lit up by vivid bits of local color. Alfred Hayes, in "The City of Beggars," describes in enlisted-man language the scene on the docks as his ship arrives to liberate an Italian city:

> The wops came down to the port
> When we docked
> Dressed in the most fantastic rags,
> Infantry caps on their heads
> And feet tied in flour bags,
> A garibaldian cape and throat scarved
> With a dirty towel,
> Half wild and half starved.
> We threw them bread and cigarettes
> Crowding over the starboard rail
> To see what Italy was like.

The soldiers here are American innocents abroad, hoping to see "what Italy was like." They behold no Mediterranean splendor, but rather the shelled remnants of a town:

> Fallen masonry and dust
> Hanging balconies and stairs
> Iron and iron rust
> Abasso Il Duce on warehouse walls
> And no glass anywheres.
> Ruined and in ruins.

The sailors, in fact, are still guileless tourists, if of an unexpected scene. Louis Simpson, in "A Bower of Roses," captures in this anecdotal way an equivalent "tourism" of American soldiers easily advancing ("Then... Then... And then") as the Germans retreat without engaging the invading forces:

> Now and then a shell flew over.
> For every shell Krupp fired
> General Motors sent back four....
>
> One morning they crossed the Rhine.
> Then they were marching through
> villages
> where the people stood and stared.
> Then they rode in convoys of trucks
> on the autobahns. Deeper in.
> The areas on the map of Germany
> marked with the swastika kept
> diminishing,
> and then, one day, there were none.

But "A Bower of Roses" weakens as it tries to generalize beyond the local. Simpson's American soldier, after a happy reunion with a prostitute in Paris, recalls the song "How Are You Going to Keep Them Down on the Farm? (After They've Seen Paree)," and remarks to himself, ending the poem,

> He supposed this was what life taught
> you,
> that words you thought were a joke,
> and applied to someone else,
> were real, and applied to you.

That shallow reflection does not seem sufficient as the concluding response to a war.

The short narrative poems that implicate the writers directly in acute situations are more humanly gripping. Edward Field (in a harrowing example) recounts the crash of an American bomber, while claiming by his title ("World War II") that the incident is representative of war as a whole. It is a tale of individual guilt or not-guilt: its strength lies in its inability to resolve personal feeling, even in memory. The navigator (who speaks the poem) finds, once his plane has crashed and he is in the freezing ocean, that there is no room for him in the nearer of the two inflatable rafts; desperate, he clings to it until he declares that he cannot hold on any longer:

> and a little rat-faced boy from
> Alabama, one of the gunners,
> got into the icy water in my place,
> and I got on the raft in his.
> He insisted on taking off his flying
> clothes
> which was probably his downfall
> because even wet clothes are
> protection,
> and then worked hard, kicking with
> his legs, and we all paddled,
> to get to the other raft
> and tie them together.
> The gunner got in the raft with the
> pilot
> and lay in the wet.
> Shortly after, the pilot started gurgling

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green foam from his mouth—
maybe he was injured in the crash
against the instruments—
and by the time we were rescued,
he and the little gunner were both
dead.

The speaker interjects a brief admission of guilt for having allowed the gunner to take his place in the icy water:

It was like those who survived the
death camps
by letting others go into the ovens in
their place.
It was him or me, and I made up my
mind to live.

But after this apology he quickly resumes his terse narrative. The survivors are rescued by a British boat and delivered "to a hospital on shore / for treatment or disposal. / None of us even caught cold, only the dead." Two weeks later they are back at the air base ("the dead crewmen replaced by living ones") and have resumed "hauling bombs over the continent of Europe, / destroying the Germans and their cities."

I admire Field's "World War II" for its confessional candor: bombing, in the mind of the crew, is primarily aimed at civilians, "destroying the Germans." Only after that naked truth are the ostensible targets mentioned—"and their cities." The central anecdote—revealing the young navigator's determination to survive at all cost—seems a damning one. Yet the generalizing title of the poem implies that the self-regarding choice is the normal one, made by all but heroes. Still, the navigator's closing lines ("None of us even caught cold, *only the dead*. . . . / the *dead* crewmen [were] replaced by living ones") show him—though he is unharmed, rescued, back to work, and even ready to justify his crucial choice—permanently unable to shake off the memory of the dead. What might seem, in its simple diction, an artless narrative, is cunningly framed to suspend the reader between sympathy and revulsion.

An equally brave refusal to take refuge in self-pity or self-exculpation can be seen in George Oppen's bleak "Survival: Infantry." Oppen, very remarkably, enters the scene of ground combat without any psychological defenses at all:

Where did all the rocks come from?
And the smell of explosives
Iron standing in mud
We crawled everywhere on the ground
without seeing the earth again
We were ashamed of our half life and
our misery: we saw that everything
had died.

And the letters came. People who
addressed us thru our lives
They left us gasping. And in tears
In the same mud in the terrible
ground

The truth-telling in Field and Oppen stands up better than the alternatives: lyric sweetness or self-exempting satire. The conscientious objector William Everson is guilty of the sweetening, as he narrates the crash of a bomber crew who return from a raid, their fuel exhausted, to find no signs of their home aircraft carrier:

None were there.
Neither smoke nor smudge;
Neither spar nor splice nor rolling
raft.
Only the wide waiting waste,
That each of them saw . . .
[They] straggled down on their
wavering wings . . .
Down at last for the low hover,
And the short quick quench of
the sea.

As an account of appalled shock followed by violent death, this passage is too consciously "lovely," with its repeated resort to soothing alliteration (a "wide waiting waste" seen from "wavering wings," the "quick quench" at the ending).

THE OPPOSITE KIND OF FAILURE, in which the poet takes an easy satiric stance against war, appears in the conscientious objector William Stafford's "Explaining the Big One." This is a demotic parody of the vagueness of post-war civilian memory, in which Hitler, Stalin, Tokyo Rose, F.D.R., Truman, and Eisenhower congeal in the sludge of popular recall. Stafford's poem reads, in part,

Remember that leader with the funny
mustache?—
liked flags and marching?—gave
loyalty
a bad name? Didn't drink, they say,
but liked music, and was jolly,
sometimes.

And then the one with the big
mustache
and the wrinkled uniform, always
jovial
for the camera but eliminated
malcontents
by the millions. He was our friend,
I think, . . .

It was us
against the bad guys, then. You
should have been there.

Discrepancies in tone and diction undermine this parody: the people who might say "It was us / against the bad guys" would scarcely say that Stalin was "always jovial / for the camera but eliminated malcontents / by the millions." And "Explaining the Big One" is not really a war poem: it is rather a poem scorning Americans for their indifference to history and their sentimental morality. The blunted comic edge of Stafford's easy contempt hacks rather than pierces.

Kenneth Koch—a finer producer of irony than Stafford—thinks up the imaginative idea of addressing World War II directly, as if it were a personified deity. Koch's poem recognizes that wars have a momentum of their own, at first politically and then strategically, and that the hapless boy caught up in them is, for the time being, a passive missile. "Early on," says the poet to World War II, "you introduced me to young women in bars," but then the atmosphere tightens:

It was a time of general confusion
Of being a body hurled at a wall.
I didn't do much fighting. I sat,
rather I stood, in a foxhole. . . .
The entire object of my existence
To eliminate Japanese soldiers
By killing them
With a rifle or with a grenade.

"It wasn't," the poet says dryly of war, "Like anything I'd done / Before, on the paved / Streets of Cincinnati / Or on the ballroom floor / At Mr. Vathé's dancing class":

What would Anne Marie Goldsmith
Have thought of me
If instead of asking her to dance
I had put my BAR to my shoulder
And shot her in the face

The ambience becomes bloodier. In the Leyte night a soldier in a nearby foxhole has his throat cut. The young Koch thinks absurdly, "I can't be killed—because of my poetry. I have to live on in order to write it." At the close of the poem he is still addressing World War II:

I'm glad you ended. I'm glad I didn't

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die. Or lose my mind.
As machines make ice
We made dead enemy soldiers. . . .
All you cared about was existing and
being won.
You died of a bomb blast in Nagasaki,
and there were parades.

Koch's poem, by addressing the war as a deity responsible for tearing him away from a normal existence, finds a way to demonstrate the absolute impossibility of integrating the automaton self of combat (controlled by that deity) with either the adolescent self dancing with Anne Marie Goldsmith or the future self marching in victory parades. The poet spares his conscript self nothing: we know that he put his rifle to his shoulder and shot a fellow human being in the face, that he was a corpse-making machine, and that Anne Marie Goldsmith would not like him to tell her that. We know that his Uncle Leo (writing "Some day you may wish / You were footloose and twenty on Leyte again") is a civilian fool.

THE HORTATORY OR REFLECTIVE poems in this anthology come off less well, for the most part, than the ones of personal narrative that I have so far been quoting. The hortatory ones put the writer in a pulpit. May Sarton, in "Navigator," reflecting, like Richard Eberhart, on the making of a boy into a soldier, urges her reader to think how much better it would be to train the boy in more heartwarming functions—"to build, to love, to serve":

Take a marvelous boy
And knead him into manhood for
destruction's joy. . . .
O the composed mind and the electric
nerve
Were never trained like this to build,
to love, to serve.

Look at him now and swear by every
bomb he will release,
This shall be done. This shall be better
done in peace!

It seems not to matter what entities the imagined postwar boy will build or love or serve; Sarton's vagueness vacates the concepts. Her closing lines aim at Churchillian force, but they come off as merely stagy. They avert themselves from the intractable persistence of force even in peacetime, and from the human appetite for violence. They are utopian, not intelligent.

And even a poet as gifted as Robert Duncan becomes dim when he begins to reflect on large transcendent goods—life, love, hope, wonder, dream, God:

[B]ecause love remains, must there
be life
putting out branches to cover its
wound?
Why do I wait when they take from
me hope
and burn out the wonder, for what
country, what
Always, our dream of tomorrow,
to be there
more real than this country? Consider
in quiet
the leaves of light that appear,
even here,
in this wilderness, tormented by God.

IF BOTH THE HORTATORY AND THE reflective have their pitfalls for the poet of war, he encounters a different danger when he assumes the voice of a person different from himself, recounting an experience that he has not undergone. Randall Jarrell does not escape this danger in his memorable poem "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner." The gunner's posthumous locutions are hardly conceivable as those of an ordinary soldier: he refers to his country as "the State"; he alludes to the earthly "dream of life"; he composes his self-epitaph in the grim spirit of Wilfred Owen:

From my mother's sleep I fell into the
State,
And I hunched in its belly till my
wet fur froze.
Six miles from earth, loosed from its
dream of life,
I woke to black flak and the
nightmare fighters.
When I died they washed me out of
the turret with a hose.

What we are hearing here is Jarrell's voice (which is why the poem is a striking one, if unconvincing as a mimesis of non-poet soldier-speech). Anthony Hecht, too, takes on (in "Rites and Ceremonies") the voice of a persona, that of a Jew gassed in a concentration camp. Hecht borrows Whitman's claim, "I am the man, I suffered, I was there," as he turns to ventriloquism:

I am there, I am there. I am pushed
through
With the others to the strange room
Without windows; whitewashed walls,
cement floor. . . .
And now we start
To panic, to claw at each other, to wail
As the rubber-edged door closes on
chance and choice.

The alliterative phrase "chance and choice" is a Yeatsian one ("Chance being at one with Choice at last . . . / Cruelties of Choice and Chance" says Yeats's queen in "Solomon and the Witch"), and falls, to my ear, too neatly within the wailing of the condemned. It blurs the believability of the anguish. Poetic empathy understandably seeks a strategy of identification with victims, but both Jarrell and Hecht remain too much their adroit rhetorical selves as they write these would-be dramatic speeches.

AMONG ALL THESE POETS, PERhaps Howard Nemerov succeeds so eminently because it was only in 1987 (almost fifty years after his 1942 enlistment in the Canadian Air Force and his subsequent service in the Coastal Command of the RAF) that he composed his *War Stories*. The grimly comic and darkly ironic war poems of this volume have had time to mature from loose narratives to dense summaries. They are continuous with Nemerov's other poems; the voice is not that of an isolated or disavowed younger self alone with his war. Some of the poems are lyrical and sad; others are rueful or sardonic. I quote the irreproachable "IFF" ("Identification Friend or Foe"), a blank-verse poem about the hazardous war in the air. It is composed in three symmetrical nine-line parts: the first describes mean-spirited superior officers; the second, a fellow flyer who is an anti-Semite; the third, English gunners who mistakenly fire on English planes caught in a commanded holding pattern above the Thames. The last line of the poem deepens to an abyss unforeseen by the reader.

I.
Hate Hitler? No, I spared him hardly
a thought.
But Corporal Irmin, first, and later on
The O.C. (Flying), Wing Commander
Briggs,
And the station C. O. Group Captain
Ormery—
Now there were men were objects fit
to hate,
Hitler a moustache and a little curl
In the middle of his forehead, whereas
these
Bastards were bastards in your daily
life,

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With Power in their pleasure, smile
or frown.

2.
Not to forget my navigator Bert,
Who shyly explained to me that the
Jews
Were ruining England and Hitler
might be wrong
But he had the right idea ... We
were a crew,
And went on so, the one pair left alive
Of a dozen that chose each other
flipping coins
At the OTU, but spoke no civil word
Thereafter, beyond the words that
had to do
With the drill for going out and
getting back.

3.
One night, with a dozen squadrons
coming home
To Manston, the tower gave us orbit
and height
To wait our turn in their lofty
waiting-room,
And on every circuit, when we crossed
the Thames,
Our gunners in the estuary below
Loosed off a couple of dozen rounds
on spec,
Defending the Commonwealth as
detailed to do,
Their lazy lights so slow, then
whipping past.
All the above were friends. And then
the foe.

Nemerov's mastery of tone is a wonder, as it encompasses the venomous listing of the sadistic officers by their full titles, the brief visual caricature of Hitler, the impotent language of subordinates about superiors ("bastards, bastards"), the laconic sketch of Bert who "shyly explained" the perfidy of the Jews, the deletion of mention of the eleven lost crews, the brief glimpse of vanished insouciance in the Operational Training Unit, the reduction of missions to their bare bones ("going out and getting back"), the inclusion of a snatched precious moment of poetic observation (the "lofty waiting room" of the sky), and the mimicked acceleration of the anti-aircraft bullets ("so slow, then whipping past"). The pacing has tightness, then looseness; the focus changes from close to far; the canvas slowly darkens from the serio-comic oppression on base by Corporal Irmin, to the estrangement from Bert within the airplane, to the terror of being shot at while in a hideously predictable orbit.

Having enumerated all the destructive "friends," the poem pronounces its self-epitaph: "All the above were friends. And then the foe." The archaic word "foe"—still embedded in the name of the aircraft signaling device from which the poem takes its title—plunges us into the archaeology of war, the immemorial stationing of enemies in combat. Nemerov's sustained power here over language and genre and form is unerring. Nothing slips, nothing sags, nothing is wantonly exaggerated, nothing rings false, nothing is over-athletic or over-sentimental. The comic and the deadly face off in fine-drawn co-existence; the absurdity and wickedness and sheer inattention of military troops all put in an appearance. And there is nothing to be done. Nemerov's tense tightrope is stretched, as always, between the value of human life and its futility.

Anyone looking, by contrast, for the worst poem in *Poets of World War II* can turn to Robert Lowell's "On the Eve of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception: 1942," which contains these perfectly awful Hopkinsian lines addressed to the Virgin Mary:

Oh, if soldiers mind you well
They shall find you are their belle
And belly too;
Christ's bread and beauty came
by you,
Celestial Hoyden, when our Lord
Gave up the weary Ghost and died,
You shook a sword
From his torn side.

(On the other hand, Lowell's laconic later account of his time as a conscientious objector, in "Memories of West Street and Lepke," is a marvel of dispassionate evocation, as the young poet finds himself in the West Street Jail with the head of Murder Incorporated.)

THE LITERATURE OF COMBAT—given the historical restrictions on women's service—has been a male genre, although women's autobiographies and letters have described the home front in time of war, and nurses in the field have contributed accounts of trauma. Shapiro includes work by six women poets: Marianne Moore (on the grisliness of war death), H.D. (on her meeting with a soldier in the RAF), May Sarton (as above, on the processing of a boy into a soldier), Eve Triem (on the bombing of Greece), Gwendolyn Brooks (on a "Negro hero"), and Ann Darr, a Women's Air Force Service

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test pilot (on "Flight as a Way of Life"). The poems by women suffer from moralizing or sentimentality, but so do many of the poems by men, proving that being in combat is no guarantee of writing well about it.

Still, the genre of war poetry has historically belonged to men, since from boyhood men know that they must expect to face conscription in time of war (and, in many countries, must spend a stated period in military service, even in times of peace). War and soldiering occupy the male imagination from a young age, just as the prospect of giving birth occupies the female imagination. In each case, one cannot avoid seeing the potential fate looming ahead. Men's war poetry is nourished on a great deal of earlier role-playing and reflection, whereas most women have no such store of military images, thoughts, and feelings to fall back on when they turn to the subject of war. This relative impoverishment of the female imagination with respect to war may change as armies become unisex collectives; but it will be a long time before girls, anticipating conscription, prefer gun-play to doll-play, and camouflage suits to Snow White costumes.

For the time being, it is satire on military action rather than admiration of it that women war poets might muster. It is a pity that the most excellent and complex war poem by a woman poet, Elizabeth Bishop's "Roosters," written in 1946, did not find a place in *Poets of World War II*. Here are Bishop's military roosters:

> the roosters brace their cruel feet
> and glare
>
> with stupid eyes
> while from their beaks there rise
> the uncontrolled, traditional cries.
>
> Deep from protruding chests
> in green-gold medals dressed,
> planned to command and terrorize
> the rest,
>
> the many wives
> who lead hens' lives
> of being courted and despised. . . .

Bishop's roosters fight and die in a poem that seems, for a good while, merely a lethal feminist attack on blind military ferocity. If it were such, it would have ended with the bloody corpse of the slain rooster:

> He is flung
> on the gray ash-heap, lies in dung
> with his dead wives
> with open, bloody eyes,
> while those metallic feathers oxidize.

But Bishop's war poem is more ambitious than to aim at satire alone. Is there any redemption, she asks herself, from this warrior ethic of male ferocity? In an unforeseeable turn, the poet remembers the fact that in "old holy sculpture" the rooster symbolizes Peter's denial of Christ. Yet in spite of his failure of fidelity, Peter became the rock on which the Church was founded. The bronze cock outside the Lateran is there to tell everyone

> that even the Prince
> of the Apostles long since
> had been forgiven, and to convince
>
> all the assembly
> that "Deny deny deny"
> is not all the roosters cry.

The Latin inscription on a marble column, "*Gallus canit; flet Petrus,*" sums up the strange ways of symbolism: because the crowing of the cock causes Peter to weep in sorrow (remembering Jesus's words, now fulfilled, "Before the cock crows thou shalt deny me thrice"), the rooster comes to mean, iconographically, repentance and forgiveness. The poet now stands rebuked for hitherto confining the rooster to her own vengeful symbol system, forgetting the more humane emblem of Christian art. Her own ferocity seeps away, and a new hope rises in her as dawn gilds the world: "The cocks are now almost inaudible." In the central thematic moment of the poem, Bishop endorses forgiveness rather than counter-ferocity as a response to war, as hope, surmounting despair, turns tears to gems:

> There is inescapable hope, the pivot;
>
> yes, and there Peter's tears
> run down our chanticleer's
> sides and gem his spurs.

Very few of the poems in Harvey Shapiro's anthology rise to this comprehensive desire to see both the justification for—and the mistakenness of—one's own emotions concerning war. Bishop's poem is long (132 lines) and no doubt expensive to reproduce. I hope that in a second printing Shapiro might find room for its opening fire and fierceness, its concluding tears and hope. ■

David Stoll

Black Coffee

SILENCE ON THE MOUNTAIN: STORIES OF TERROR, BETRAYAL, AND FORGETTING IN GUATEMALA
By Daniel Wilkinson
(Houghton Mifflin, 373 pp., $24)

IN SEPTEMBER, A GUATEMALAN court convicted an army colonel of ordering the assassination of one of my colleagues, the anthropologist Myrna Mack. Mack had been interviewing victims of counterinsurgency operations when she was knifed to death on a busy afternoon street in Guatemala City. Colonel Juan Valencia Osorio worked for the presidential security staff. That might seem an odd place to find a murderer, except in Guatemala, where army officers are accustomed to getting whatever they want from the country's nominal democracy. The presidential security detail is also where the actual murderer turned up, an army plainclothesman who stabbed Mack twenty-seven times. That the police investigator who identified the assassin was himself murdered, that all but one of the witnesses were suddenly struck with amnesia, that a succession of judges and prosecutors received so many threats that they left the country, and that it took thirteen years to convict Colonel Valencia, the assassin's commanding officer—all this suggests why Guatemalans can seem a forgetful lot.

People who study violence learn to brush past the many people who will not tell us much and to hit up those who will. In my own Guatemalan research, ex-mayors and ex-combatants, church leaders and imported civil servants were often the first persons

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to help me. Whether by accident or design, a Yale law student named Daniel Wilkinson was slow to move up the social scale to the confident and the talkative. Instead he lingered by a veritable well of forgetfulness, under the peaceful foliage of a coffee plantation. In a dumb-smart succession of hopeless interviews and other misadventures, he amplifies the sound of silence in the lower classes of a tropical society.

COFFEE IS ONE OF THOSE TROPICAL commodities with more history than most of us care to think about. Coffee and its opportunities were what persuaded Guatemala's horseback caudillos to proclaim a liberal republic in the late nineteenth century. Coffee required the land and labor of the country's Mayan Indian population for new plantations. Coffee enabled Guatemala's upper classes to claim to be a modern nation on the basis of a semi-feudal labor system. And along with the proverbial banana, it was coffee that brought about a national land reform, the CIA's destruction of which in 1954 led to a guerrilla war that concluded only recently.

Ever since the Eisenhower administration ended Guatemala's most credible experiment with democracy in 1954, the country has attracted foreigners looking for a revolution to right this and other wrongs. Despite the coffee economy's importance, researchers tend to stay in the capital or to head for picturesque Mayan towns in the congenial, spring-like highlands. And once installed there, they rarely descend to the suffocating humidity of the coast, where agribusiness reigns, or to the coffee piedmont, where, until the recent collapse of coffee prices, much of the Mayan population spent part of the year as plantation labor. Consequently, little has been published about the conflict between the army and the guerrillas in the coffee region.

Wilkinson's entrée was a planter of German descent who married an American college professor and is, for all intents and purposes, an American herself. (I am a friend of hers.) Ever since childhood, the pseudonymous Sara Endler found it hard to enjoy her family's comforts while, just yards away, obsequious dependents were living on dirt floors. Once she inherited the estate from her father, she vowed to treat the workers fairly. As a good liberal, she was also willing to trust an Ivy League radical who, because he was coming to Guatemala on the usual pilgrimage to the heart of darkness, was not likely to portray her family very sympathetically.

How did it happen?

FRIENDLY FIRE

The Accidental Shootdown of U.S. Black Hawks over Northern Iraq

Scott A. Snook

On April 14, 1994, two U.S. Air Force F-15 fighters accidentally shot down two U.S. Army Black Hawk Helicopters over Northern Iraq, killing all 26 peacekeepers onboard. A full array of military and civilian investigative and judicial procedures failed to produce a culprit. According to Lieutenant Colonel Scott Snook, a victim of friendly fire himself, this tragic event was a "normal accident." He explains how this particular accident happened and why we should expect similar accidents in the future.

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Sure enough, Wilkinson sees through the family stories of overcoming adversity through virtue to the racial favoritism that gave handsome opportunities to light-skinned immigrants such as the Endlers while suborning local Indians and mestizos into a low-wage workforce. Since labor was scarce, planters settled Mayan families on their property by lending them money, allowing them to grow their own crops, and playing paterfamilias. More than a few peasants were willing to accept lifelong poverty and submission in exchange for stable employment and protection from the government's forced-labor laws, which had been designed with just this end in view. Even today, there are old men who remember the *patróns* of yore with affection. Planters recruited most of their peons from distant Indian communities, so the workers could not claim ancestral ownership of the land that they worked. Their idea of who they were ethnically was also betwixt and between. While their progenitors were Mayan Indians, they raised their children in Spanish and looked down on more recent arrivals from Indian communities. "They don't know their history," claimed a local youth who obtained an education and escaped.

When Wilkinson asked the Endler laborers about the land reform of the early 1950s, they did not want to talk about it any more than they wanted to talk about the ongoing army-guerrilla conflict. The usual response to his questions was "Nothing happened here." The local historian claimed to have forgotten about the land reform even though he had presided over it as mayor. Other old-time activists had become fervent evangelicals who answered every question with an appropriate verse from the Bible.

Eventually Wilkinson found local politicians who would talk to him, as well as an archive holding documentary remains of the land reform. The Endler laborers had indeed organized a union and obtained parcels—not the whole estate, just the interstices where they already grew their own crops. When right-wing exiles invaded the country in 1954, three hundred local men volunteered to take up arms to defend the government and the land reform. After the government fell, soldiers jailed a long list of suspected Communists, including the mayor and union leaders, who were saved from execution only by an army officer's timely observation that they were not really Communists. The new American-backed regime returned the land to the Endlers after concluding that their workers had been coerced into petitioning for it. Sara's father banished the union members from his property even though it was the only job and home they had ever known. He also expelled his Guatemalan half-brother, Rafael Zamora, the son of his father and a Guatemalan woman. For helping the family's illiterate laborers write their petitions, the unfortunate Rafael ended up as a security guard and died of drink.

In the 1970s, a new organization installed itself in the mountains and the forests above the coffee estates. The Revolutionary Organization of the People in Arms (ORPA) was started by local youth and university intellectuals. Of the various Guatemalan guerrilla groups, ORPA seemed the least violent, partly because it was led by the urbane Rodrigo Asturias, the son of Miguel Angel Asturias, Guatemala's Nobel laureate in literature. ORPA was also a group to which, with a few horrifying exceptions, the army did not respond with its trademark village massacres. Why this was so is an interesting question. One possibility is ORPA's decision not to organize villages as publicly declared support bases. Another possible explanation is that planters needed their workers' labor too much for the army to slaughter them en masse.

After the government and a vestigial guerrilla movement signed a peace agreement in 1996, demobilized ORPA fighters told Wilkinson how coffee workers greeted them with cheers and applause in 1980–1981. The welcome was brief. While the guerrillas "were always too quick to be surrounded," Wilkinson writes, "the army was surrounding them with something much more powerful than its troops: anguish, fear, anger"—by kidnapping suspected supporters and convincing their bereaved relatives that the guerrillas were ultimately to blame. The army's reprisals sent hundreds of recruits up the mountain to join ORPA—many more than the group could support, because the army had cut off its food supply—from a population that now blamed the guerrillas for the army's murder of their husbands, brothers, and sons. So it came to pass that when ORPA arrived to burn down the Endlers' place, the workers attacked the would-be arsonists with stones and machetes.

WILKINSON'S TITLE, *Silence on the Mountain,* plays off *Fire From the Mountain,* the mock-heroic memoir of the Sandinista commandante Omar Cabezas. Like other activists who flocked to Guatemala during the peace process of the 1990s, Wilkinson wanted to "uncover the history of revolt and repression that was buried in the shadows of the past." He was arriving with the Guevarista assumption that the poor of Latin America have been waiting for the right leadership to take up arms against their oppressors. Since the land reform of the early 1950s was so promising, and the repression that followed it so undeniable, he makes a good case for guerrilla warfare as an inevitable development in the coffee zone. But in the highland communi-

Backyard

It didn't rain.
And it didn't rain.
And it didn't rain.
Returning, after a month away,
from a place up north,
the yard was parched and dying,
the hose coiled like a snake—

As if the present were past,
I walk from this thing to that,
touching dry leaves.
Here is the dogwood
that bloomed when T. was dying.
Here is the sunflower, ravaged by July,
and here is the Rose of Sharon,
coming, in August, into its own.
Here. Here. And here.
The arbor. The wisteria.
The bamboo, tenacious as ever.
The empty swing, motionless in the heat.

I unwind the coiled hose
and turn the water on,
watching it stream into the ground.
Everything is a mouth,
thirsty and unappeasable.

With each step, I move farther
into the future, wondering,
How will I ever leave all this?
How? How does one ever leave?
I am the water-bearer.
I cannot die!

ELIZABETH SPIRES

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ties where the majority of Mayas live, there is ample evidence that the guerrillas had a mixed reception. Even in the coffee plantations, there is the old problem of who isn't cheering: when liberators receive a rousing welcome, how many people stay behind closed doors? Studying silence is a great idea, but it also provides an opportunity for projecting whatever you suspected in the first place. Wilkinson's book begins as a record of people who will not talk to him, or who do not provide what he regards as credible answers, but it ends with demobilized guerrillas telling him much of what he had expected to hear.

Except for finally managing to burn down the Endlers' house, Wilkinson's guerrillas never do anything that wasn't a justified reaction. The actual war was not so simple. ORPA's most horrendous crime—which the human rights movement mistakenly attributed to the army for many years—occurred near the gringo hangout of Antigua in 1988. To protect the identity of a couple of his men who were local, an ORPA commander ordered the strangulation of twenty-two of their unarmed neighbors who had stumbled upon the secret. Most of the victims were family men who left behind scores of fatherless children.

But Wilkinson does acknowledge the terrible cost that guerrilla strategy exacted on nearby civilians, who took the punishment that the guerrillas nimbly dodged. He also faces just how completely the army seems to have won the war, not just militarily but also politically. As he recruits witnesses for a truth commission, many of their neighbors are petitioning the army to re-occupy the area to suppress a crime wave. As one of his allies explains: "They're still scared of the army. But they're more scared of the criminals. So they're choosing what seems less bad. [The army] is less bad because it's predictable. The robbers rob anyone. The army won't bother you so long as you don't provoke them."

Back under the coffee trees, the war hastened decisions that estate owners probably would have made anyway. "The only way to have a more humane plantation," Wilkinson says of Sara Endler's mounting financial difficulties, "was to get rid of the workers." The plantation's dependents had doubled since the 1950s, when her father already had more workers than he could use. So she fired them all, gave them plots of land as severance pay, and re-hired the workers she needed. Caught in an industry-wide credit squeeze, other plantations were doing the same. After more than a century of playing *patrón*, they were freeing their workers to face an overcrowded labor market on their own.

For the ex-guerrillas, who are now struggling to compete at the ballot box, the ultimate blow was that "the reality they had fought so many years to change ceased to exist. When the guerrillas had shown up on the plantations in 1980, they had not talked so much about a utopian future as about an unjust past. Specifically, they talked about reclaiming what had been taken away in 1954." But by the end of the war, Wilkinson continues,

> workers no longer lived on the plantation their forebears built. Often they no longer even worked on it. Rather, they were hired by several different plantations over the course of a year, and only on a temporary basis. They could no longer ... sense that the plantation where they were working was also theirs. All they had claim to was the day's wages.... Today young people in La Igualdad no longer see a future in the plantations—and therefore care little about the plantations' past.... Like the plantation owners, their expectations and tastes are increasingly shaped by what is being marketed from the world's metropolitan centers. Even if they can find work in coffee, they aspire to better things. And so they set out to expand their horizons in the sweatshops and burgeoning shantytowns of Guatemala City, while the more ambitious among them head off to carry the bricks, vacuum the offices, and mow the lawns of the great White Cities to the north.

No book can sum up an entire country, but some have to be pressed into service. *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, the story of a counter-insurgency survivor who won the Nobel Peace Prize, used to be taken as the book that summed up Guatemala; but Menchú was a guerrilla cadre when she gave her account, and her stock villains and militant tone did not do justice to the many Guatemalans who weren't revolutionaries. *Silence on the Mountain* provides a wider cross-section of the society because Wilkinson's quest for information takes him from the upper to the lower to the middle classes, through the different tiers of Guatemala's dependent export economy, all the way to your morning latte.

Wilkinson is also frank enough to pose questions that he cannot answer, such as when he helps the truth commission line up reluctant witnesses to testify about what the army did. What will happen to these people if and when the army returns to its old methods? At that point, human rights lawyers and foreign embassies may prove of little help. The same week that a court convicted Colonel Valencia of Myrna Mack's murder, a Guatemalan appeals court threw out the conviction of three other military men for the murder by bludgeon in 1998 of Bishop Juan Gerardi, head of the country's Catholic truth commission. This is another case where witnesses have been murdered and prosecutors have been intimidated into leaving the country. Unfortunately, there is still something to be said for silence on the mountain. ■

The Write House

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CORRESPONDENCE

Continued from page 4

through back channels, notify all the regional players that, unless they all agree to multilateral negotiations and pressure North Korea to disarm, the United States will give Japan twelve nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missiles. Given China's, Russia's, North Korea's, and South Korea's fear of a militaristic and overwhelmingly powerful Japan, I am certain that these other nations would quickly go into high gear to prevent a nuclear Japan. Meanwhile, we would offer to remove our 37,000 troops from the region and tell South Korea to handle their own security.

Although it would be a breach of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and Japan would have to revise its constitution, I am sure that, when push came to shove, Japan would be happy to get a dozen nuclear missiles while saving billions of dollars in development costs. If everybody else is willing to pass the buck on this conflict, then, instead of "Give peace a chance," we could resort to "Give nuclear blackmail a chance."

HAROLD E. BRONHEIM, M.D.
New York, New York

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Father Time

MY KIDS SNIGGERED A little nervously when I came home with *The Bitch in the House: 26 Women Tell the Truth About Sex, Solitude, Work, Motherhood, and Marriage*. They lost interest when I turned to *Mothers Who Think: Tales of Real-Life Parenthood*, a collection of columns by *Salon* contributors. Catching up on recent reportage from the Anglo-American home front (an antidote to tales from the battlefield), I also dipped into Rachel Cusk's *A Life's Work: On Becoming a Mother* and Lisa Belkin's *Life's Work: Confessions of an Unbalanced Mom*. And, like many thousands of other working mothers, I read Allison Pearson's novel *I Don't Know How She Does It: The Life of Kate Reddy, Working Mother*. I could have gone on, of course. As Margaret Carlson remarked in *Time*, "Nearly every female lucky enough to have both a child and a byline" has written about the harried life of the working mother. (Here I am doing it myself.)

BUT MY GIRLS'-NIGHT-OUT BINGE LEFT me curious to hear from the dads for a change, especially after the dissing they endured in some of these pages. ("How Many Working Fathers Does It Take to Screw in a Lightbulb?" is one essay title.) It's hardly news that most men aren't shouldering their share of the "second shift." But do fathers of our "post-second-wave" era deserve to be given quite such short shrift? I was ready to get their side of the story from, say, *I Don't Know How He Does It: The Life of Richard Shattock, Kate Reddy's Husband,* or *All in a Day's Work: On Being a Father,* or *The Daddy Diaries*. What would *The Bastard in the House* have to say? I wondered.

UNLIKE ITS FEMALE COUNTERPART, HOWever, the working-father tell-all has yet to take off as a genre. And so the moms proceed to hang dad out to dry. Specifically: He cannot be counted on to figure out "that things left at the bottom of the stairs usually need to be carried to the top of the stairs," or to "remember to pick up cat food" (or toilet paper, or coffee filters—every mother-memoirist or -novelist has her item), or to "dress the kids appropriately while allowing for their individuality," or to "bake peanut-butter-free cupcakes" for the class, or to worry obsessively about nanny issues. However hands-on he may be, dad fails to juggle everything with mom's idea of the requisite finesse and air of intense seriousness. He needs prodding, which she finds irritating; or, if he does take matters into his own hands, watch out. (Kate Reddy's husband crams the baby into clothes meant for a doll.) What's even more infuriating, one "anxious and frantic" mother fumes, is "his ability to relax when I never seemed to." Not that the rare father infused with a mother's multitasking mania and anticipatory angst makes mommy any happier; indeed, he makes "Mommy Maddest," the title of the section in *The Bitch in the House* that includes an essay called "Daddy Dearest: What Happens When He Does *More* Than His Half."

THIS PRO-FEMINIST ASSESSMENT SOMEtimes sounds oddly, and depressingly, like a vindication of conservatives who've inveighed for decades against an androgynous ideal of parenthood, warning that fathers can't, and shouldn't, be reshaped in mom's soft and solicitous image. We hadn't "bargained for how deeply the gender roles of 'nurturer' and 'provider' are ingrained in us all," sighs a contributor to *The Bitch in the House* in an essay titled "The Myth of Co-Parenting." Kate Reddy comes right out and concludes "it's biology" and offers nuggets that the most retrograde dad would never dare utter. For example, men think about "child care with their wallets," where women "feel it in their wombs." And how's this for progress? Thirty years ago, in the *Ms.* magazine classic "Click! The Housewife's Moment of Truth," mom told dad he could pick up the toys—"You have two hands," she boldly snapped—and turned on her heel. Now "the horror-at-home," as one working mother calls herself, is more likely to stride in from the office and, without saying a word or even kicking off her heels, stomp around doing the straightening herself, angrily (and guiltily) daring anyone to accuse her of letting the household slide.

BUT, AS THE BITCHES HALF-ACKNOWLEDGE, they aren't just reviving the old roles. They're revising them. Amid fervent discussions of the dangers and virtues of the touchy-feely "new" father, left and right both failed to factor in the hard-driving mother, who has proved less than graceful or entirely grateful about sharing household power. Contemporary portraits of elite motherhood are notably lacking in "natural" empathy and calm, the virtues traditionally thought to suit females for the "caring" labors of nurture. In fact, forget innate feminine compassion, much less maternal intuition. The turn-of-the-millennium mother flaunts an organizational competence and competitive drive that are enough to make a man cringe. She's a super-scheduler and events coordinator who envisages child-rearing—ideally, anyway—as an intricately engineered process over which she is expected to exert ultimate control. It's the kind of delusion dad used to bring home from the office, only to be tripped up and often enraged by the emotional chaos that sabotaged his methodical efforts to instill order. Now it's mom who whirs with a high-tech efficiency that she considers utterly lacking in his genetic hardware, or software. "Nature gives Mother an advance-warning system, . . . [and] no minder or man can match her for speed or anticipation," Kate Reddy announces; Father operates on a more old-fashioned, let's-take-each-day-as-it-comes-and-not-borrow-trouble sort of timetable. Mother also comes with a PalmPilot configured in her brain, able to store grocery lists, carpool arrangements, play dates, sports practices, music lessons, food preferences, dental appointments, shoe sizes, and endless to-do lists. Male neuronal capacity is deemed inadequate to such feats, which means fudging and forgetting and a general failure to keep up the frenetic pace.

AND SO, NOT SURPRISINGLY, THE WORKing mother also whirs with anxiety in a household that all too often fails to operate according to plan—and she's fit to be tied by the dilemma that Karen Karbo, author of the comic novel *Motherhood Made a Man Out of Me*, has framed this way: "A woman can ask a man to do something, or she can tell him how to do it, but she can't do both." Maybe it's time we stressed-out mothers tried a different approach: Ask him how he does it—or, rather, doesn't do it. Yes, it rankles that he can fall so readily into the mellower role of muddler; men have the luxury of knowing they "can only be better fathers than their fathers," Kate Reddy gripes, where mothers are plagued by insecurity. Still, the working father—I'm quite sure the kids would concur—may well have something useful to tell us, if we slowed down for a moment to listen.

ANN HULBERT

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A Nation at Risk: Twenty Years Later

Diane Ravitch is a research professor, New York University; distinguished visiting fellow, Hoover Institution; and member, Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education.

Twenty years ago this spring, the National Commission on Excellence in Education served a wake-up call to the nation in the form of a report called *A Nation at Risk*, warning that American education faced a "rising tide of mediocrity" unless actions were taken to raise expectations and achievement. Although the history of American education is littered with reports by distinguished commissions that quickly disappear from public consciousness, *A Nation at Risk* was different. It not only captured national attention, it also set the terms of debate about schooling for a generation after its publication.

The response to the report was truly amazing. Task forces, committees, and study groups were convened across the nation to discuss its implications. Most states raised graduation requirements, increased teachers' salaries, and began to look for ways to measure their schools' effectiveness. With its emphasis on improving student achievement, the report led to other reforms, including national goals set by the president and governors in 1990, the standards movement, increased course taking, and market-based approaches.

A product of its time, ***A Nation at Risk* proved to be an antidote to many of the pedagogical fads of the 1960s** such as classrooms without walls, fluffy electives, and watered-down curricula that generated public skepticism. When it became clear in the mid-1970s that SAT scores had been plummeting for nearly a decade, the public was positively alarmed. Hungry for a diagnosis that made sense, it embraced *A Nation at Risk*. Not only was the report written in plain English, but its emphasis on commonsense reforms such as raising expectations, strengthening the curriculum, improving the teaching force, and lengthening the school year clearly struck a chord.

Two decades later, ***A Nation at Risk* remains significant in terms of setting the debate and ushering in an era of reform in education, but its goals have not yet been realized.** The changes wrought by twenty years of task forces, committees, and study groups have not produced the hoped-for improvement in student achievement. Few of the commission's recommendations were properly implemented, and many of those that were proved too timid to bring about effective educational reform.

A report from the Koret Task Force on K–12 Education at the Hoover Institution concludes that it is time to go beyond the recommendations of *A Nation at Risk*. Created to study the nation's response to *A Nation at Risk* twenty years later, the Koret report lays out a reinvigorated reform agenda for our schools based on the principles of choice, transparency, and accountability: Choice to bring flexibility and innovation to how education is provided; transparency to reveal information about how the education system is working; and accountability to demonstrate that our children are learning.

The challenge before us today, as in the past, is to secure equal educational opportunity. Every American child should have the same opportunities for an excellent education. The real issue today is whether the schools are good enough to prepare students for the challenges of the twenty-first century. We cannot rest until they are.

— Diane Ravitch

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***Contact us to receive a complimentary copy of chapter one, the* Findings and Recommendations of the Koret Task Force on K–12 Education.**

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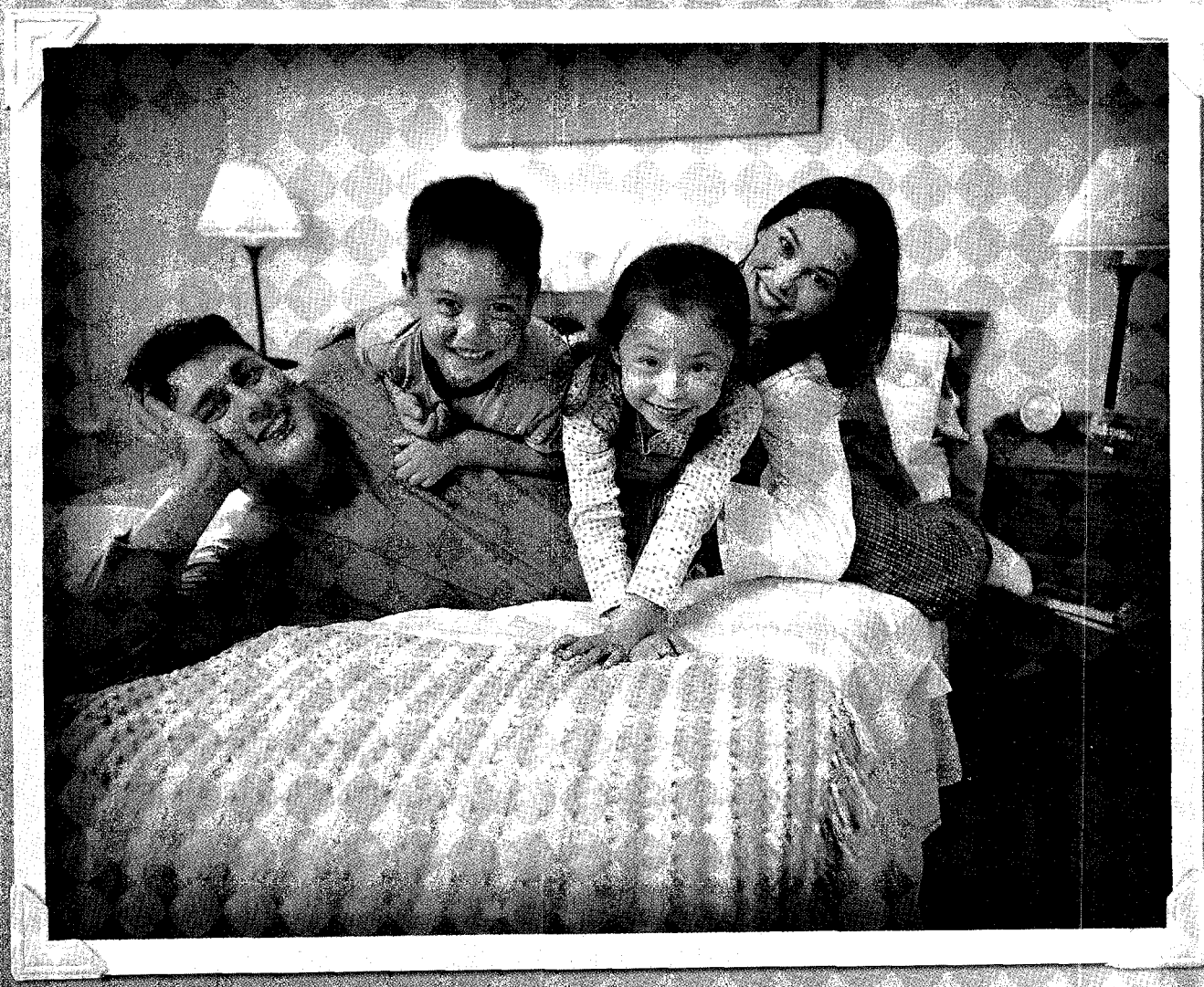

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